KITCHEN SINK COMIX
DEATH RATTLE
#4
Mature Readers
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DEATH RATTLE™

SCIENCE GONE AWRY!

Aliens, mutant rats, and space zombies converge in this issue of *Death Rattle.* John Wooley and Steve Mannion spin a tale of post-Apocalyptic college life in **(F)rats**; **Mud People** by Doug Potter reveals the hypocrisies of war, on and off this planet; Tom Sutton's bizarre genetic experiments hint at the rat in all of us; and Matt Howarth plumbs the perils of interstellar treasure-hunting in **Klemdiggers**. Way out!

Cover
Tom Sutton

(F)rats 1
John Wooley (script), Steve Mannion (art)

Mud People 7
Doug Potter

Dr. Wrotwang's Wratzwerks 16
Tom Sutton

Klemdiggers 24
Matt Howarth

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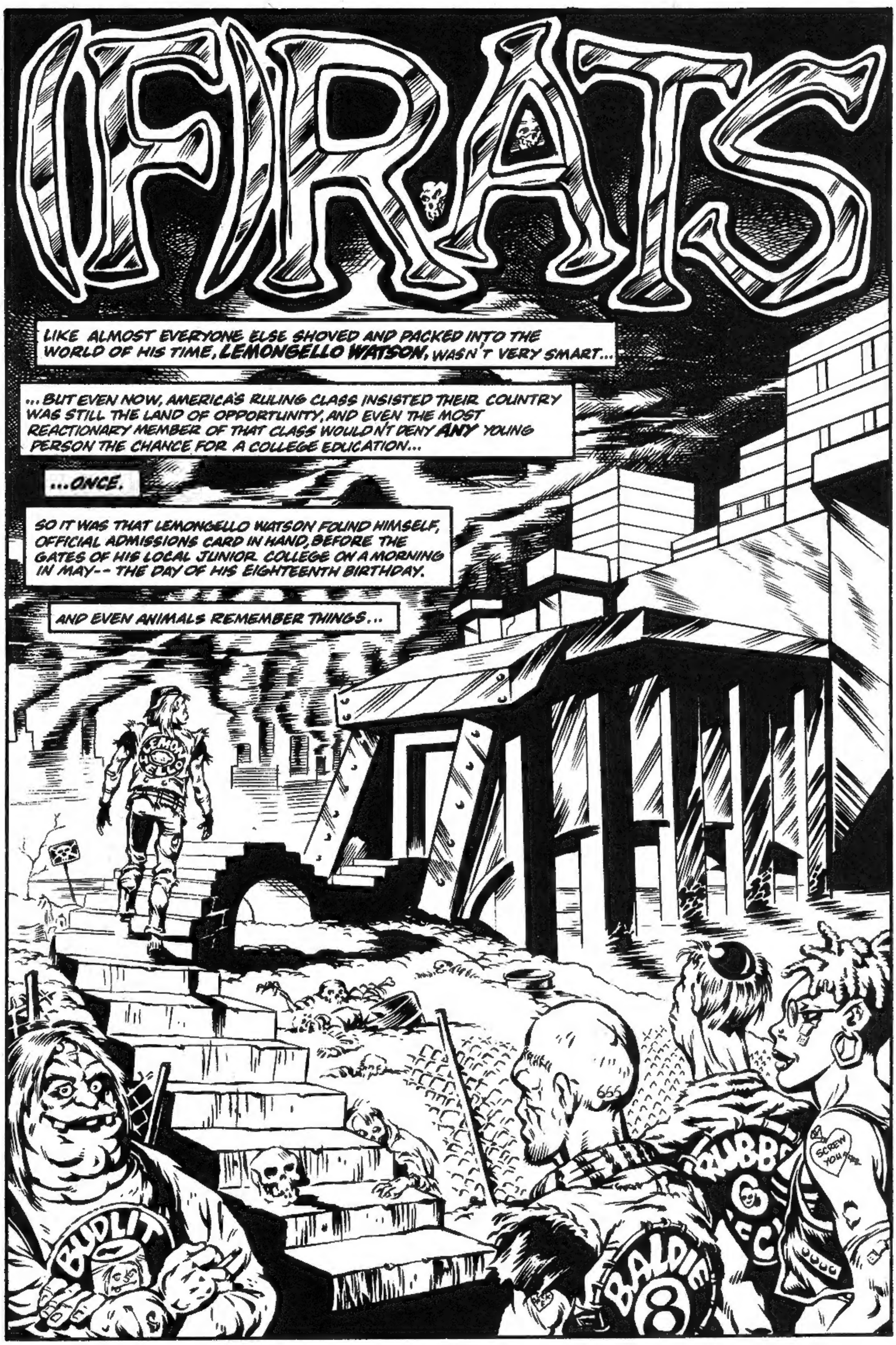

FRATS
LIKE ALMOST EVERYONE ELSE SHOVED AND PACKED INTO THE WORLD OF HIS TIME, LEMONGELLO WATSON, WASN'T VERY SMART...
...BUT EVEN NOW, AMERICA'S RULING CLASS INSISTED THEIR COUNTRY WAS STILL THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY, AND EVEN THE MOST REACTIONARY MEMBER OF THAT CLASS WOULDN'T DENY ANY YOUNG PERSON THE CHANCE FOR A COLLEGE EDUCATION...
...ONCE.
SO IT WAS THAT LEMONGELLO WATSON FOUND HIMSELF, OFFICIAL ADMISSIONS CARD IN HAND, BEFORE THE GATES OF HIS LOCAL JUNIOR COLLEGE ON A MORNING IN MAY-- THE DAY OF HIS EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY.
AND EVEN ANIMALS REMEMBER THINGS...
BUDLIT
BALDIE
SCREW YOU

IT HAD ALMOST BEEN TEN YEARS SINCE THE BLOODY COLLEGE RIOTS OF '46...
...AND BOTH LEMONJELLO AND BUDLIT WERE THERE.
SSSSSS
HEY, MAN!
KRAK
MMMMMM!
LATER, LEMONJELLO CAME TO...
KRAK!
AARGHH!
MOYO GON' EATCHA, BO'.
YEA.

LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, BUDLIT AND LEMONJELLO WANTED IN TO THAT SCHOOL...
...AND IN THEIR WAY, THEY MADE A PACT.
EACH ONE WOULD HELP THE OTHER ONE GET INTO THAT SCHOOL... NO MATTER WHAT IT TOOK.
THE SLIGHTLY OLDER BUDLIT HAD FAILED HIS EXAM A FEW WEEKS AGO, BUT HE'D RETURNED FROM HIS BRIEF CAMPUS VISIT FULL OF KNOWLEDGE...
...INCLUDING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HOW THEY MADE SURE YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY WEAPONS OR EXPLOSIVES ON YOU...
...AND THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THEY DIDN'T SEARCH YOUR CRACK VERY WELL!
NOT COINCIDENTALLY, THAT'S WHERE HE STUCK THE POWERFUL, HIGHLY CONCENTRATED EXPLOSIVE HE PLANNED TO THROW AGAINST THE DOOR ON HIS WAY OUT, KILLING THE GUARDS AND BLOWING THE DOOR OPEN... SO BUDLIT AND THE OTHERS COULD COME STORMING IN...
ENTER!
NOW HIS HEART LEAPT. THIS WAS IT!
GIT 'EM, MAN!

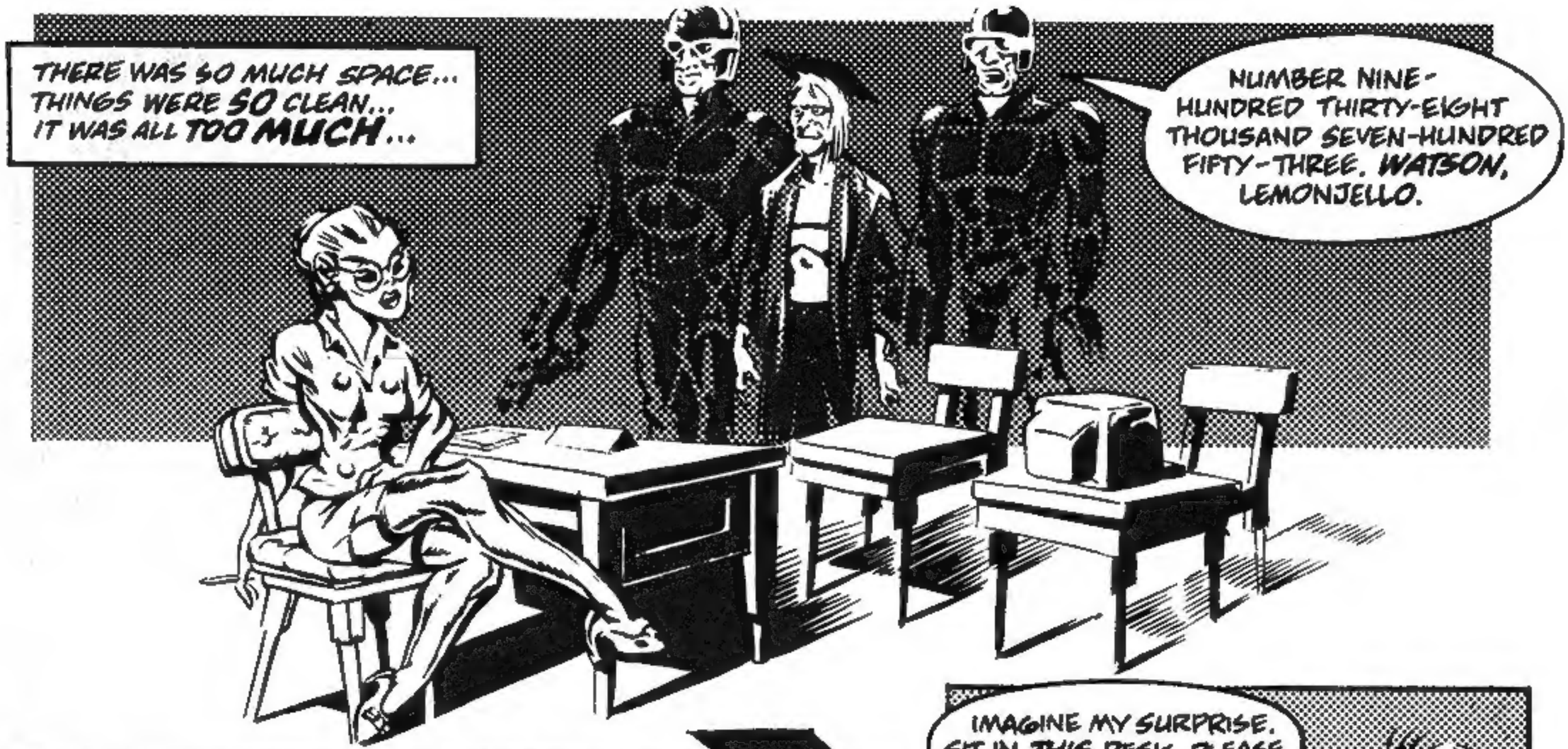
TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTHES...ALL OF THEM!

IT WAS JUST LIKE BUDLIT SAID...

...THEY DID N'T SEARCH YOUR CRACK VERY WELL.
GO THROUGH THE NEXT DOOR!

ALMOST HALF AN HOUR LATER, AFTER AUTOMATED SHOWERING, DELOUSING, AND BLOOD SALIVA TESTING, LEMONJELLO STEPPED OUT OF THE BRIDGE..
...AND INTO PARADISE!

THIS WAY!


THERE WAS SO MUCH SPACE... THINGS WERE SO CLEAN... IT WAS ALL TOO MUCH...
NUMBER NINE-HUNDRED THIRTY-EIGHT THOUSAND SEVEN-HUNDRED FIFTY-THREE. WATSON, LEMONJELLO.

CAN YOU USE A COMPUTER?
NUNH-UH!

IMAGINE MY SURPRISE. SIT IN THIS DESK, PLEASE.
KLUNK!

...SO, WHEN YOU HAVE THE ANSWER YOU THINK IS CORRECT, YOU FILL IN THE APPROPRIATE BOX WITH YOUR PENCIL. UNDERSTAND?
YEH.

OF COURSE HE COULDN'T READ, EITHER...
Pat Robertson was (a) A Great Religious leader (b) America's 44th president (c) an old television star (d) all of the above
Jim
Ted Kenne
Kool

FINISHED?
YEH.
I'LL BET. JUST A MOMENT PLEASE.
BUT HE COULD GET LUCKY.
EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, IT HAPPENED.
WELL, I'LL BE DAMNED.
GUARDS, CUE THE WELCOMING COMMITTEE.
CONGRATULATIONS, MR. WATSON-- YOU PASSED.
YOU'RE A COLLEGE MAN, NOW.

CONGRATULATIONS, FRESHMAN!
THAT'S THE WAY!
WELCOME TO THE BEST CAMPUS IN THE WORLD!

YOU'RE ONE OF US, NOW.
ONE OF US!
BOOLA BOOLA, ONE OF US!

ALL RIGHT, FRESHIE! TIME FOR YOUR INITIATION!
LET'S SEE YOU BEND OVER AND GRAB THOSE ANKLES!

LEMONJELLO STILL COULDN'T GRASP IT... HIM! A COLLEGE MAN!

THEN, HE HAPPENED TO LOOK BACK...

HEH HEH
NOOOOO!
BRAAAAM
THE LAST THING HE EVER SAW WAS THE GOLDEN CREST ON A COLLEGE BLAZER, EXPLODING LIKE A GIANT STAR DOES...
JUST BEFORE IT DIES.
IN VCELI
DVMINATI

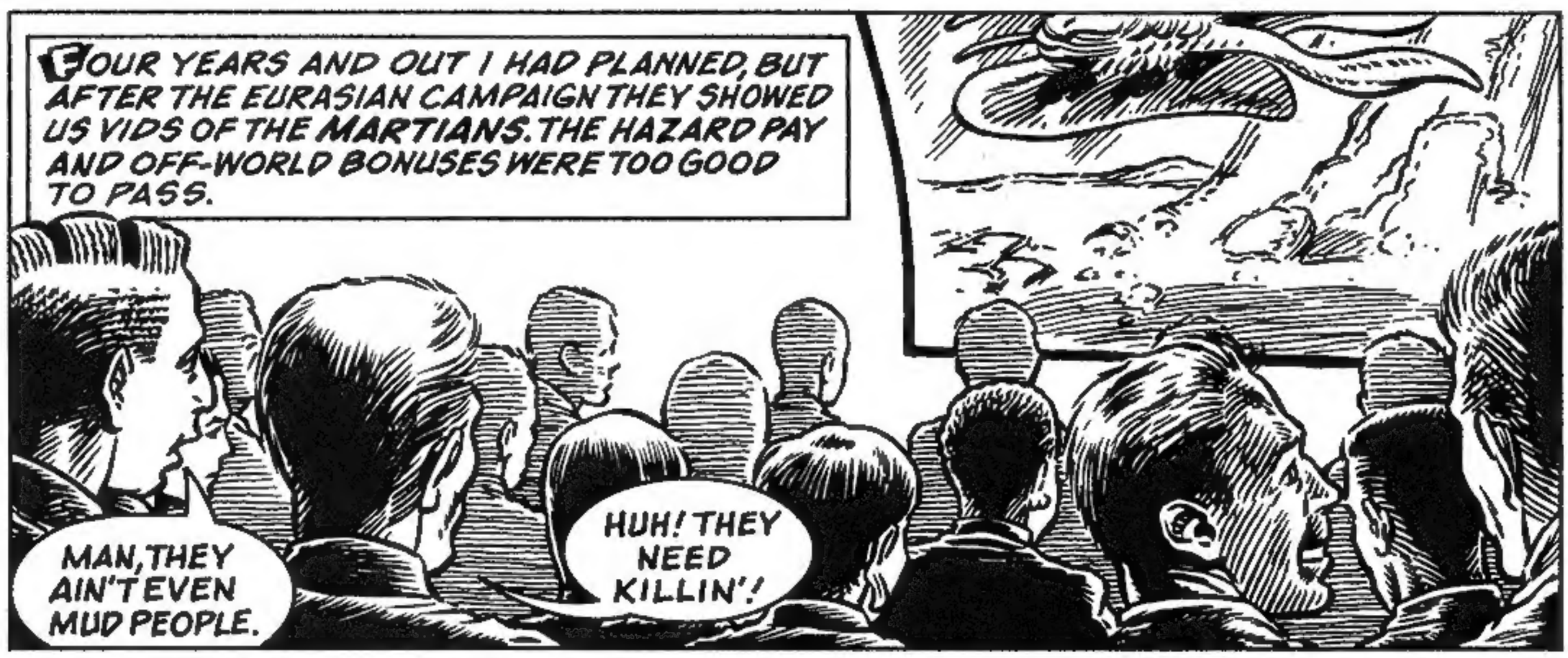
MUD PEOPLE

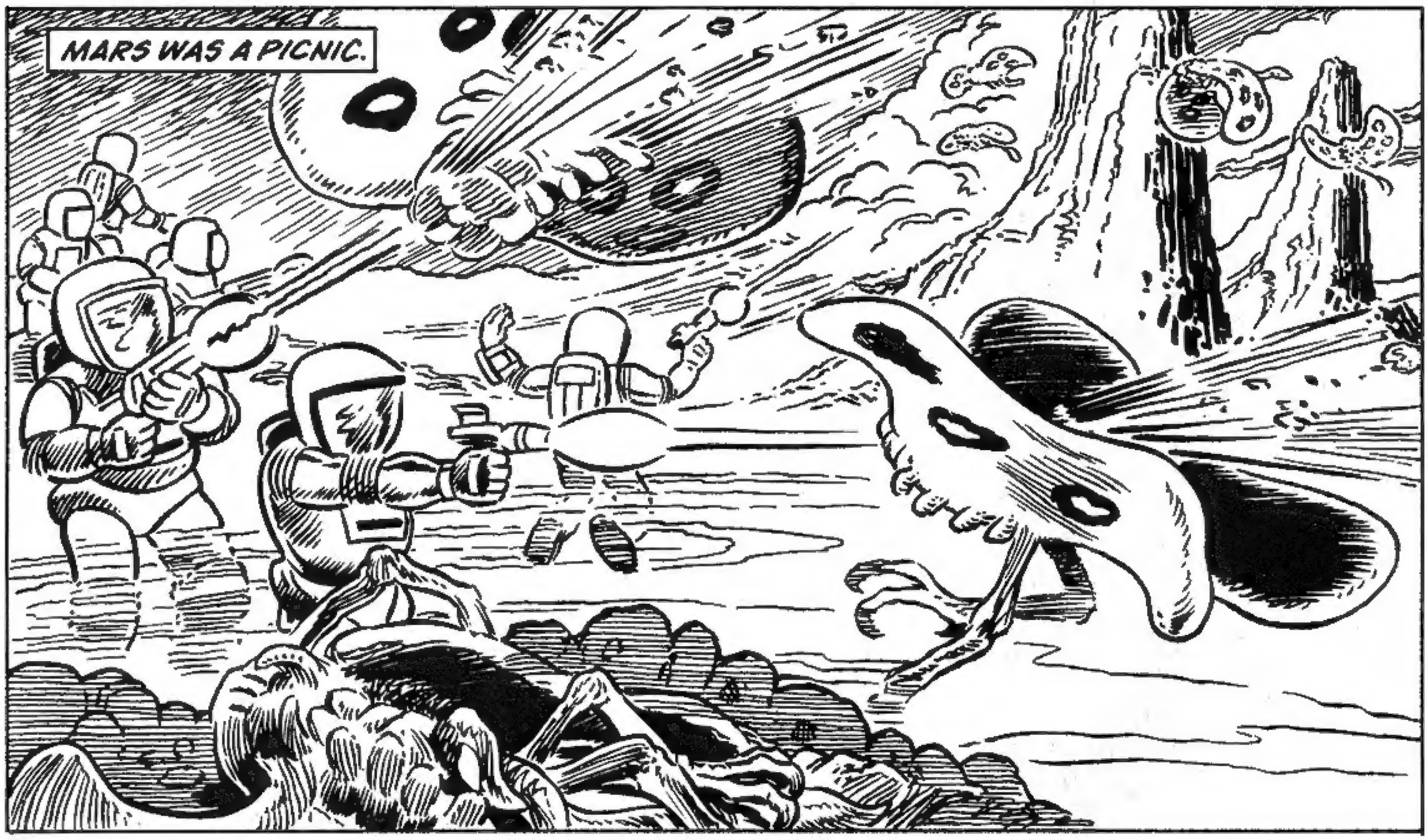
STORY & ART: DOUG POTTER

I WAS ONLY A KID WHEN I JOINED UP AND WENT OFF TO FIGHT IN THE EURASIAN WARS. I REMEMBER THE FIRST ENEMY I KILLED.

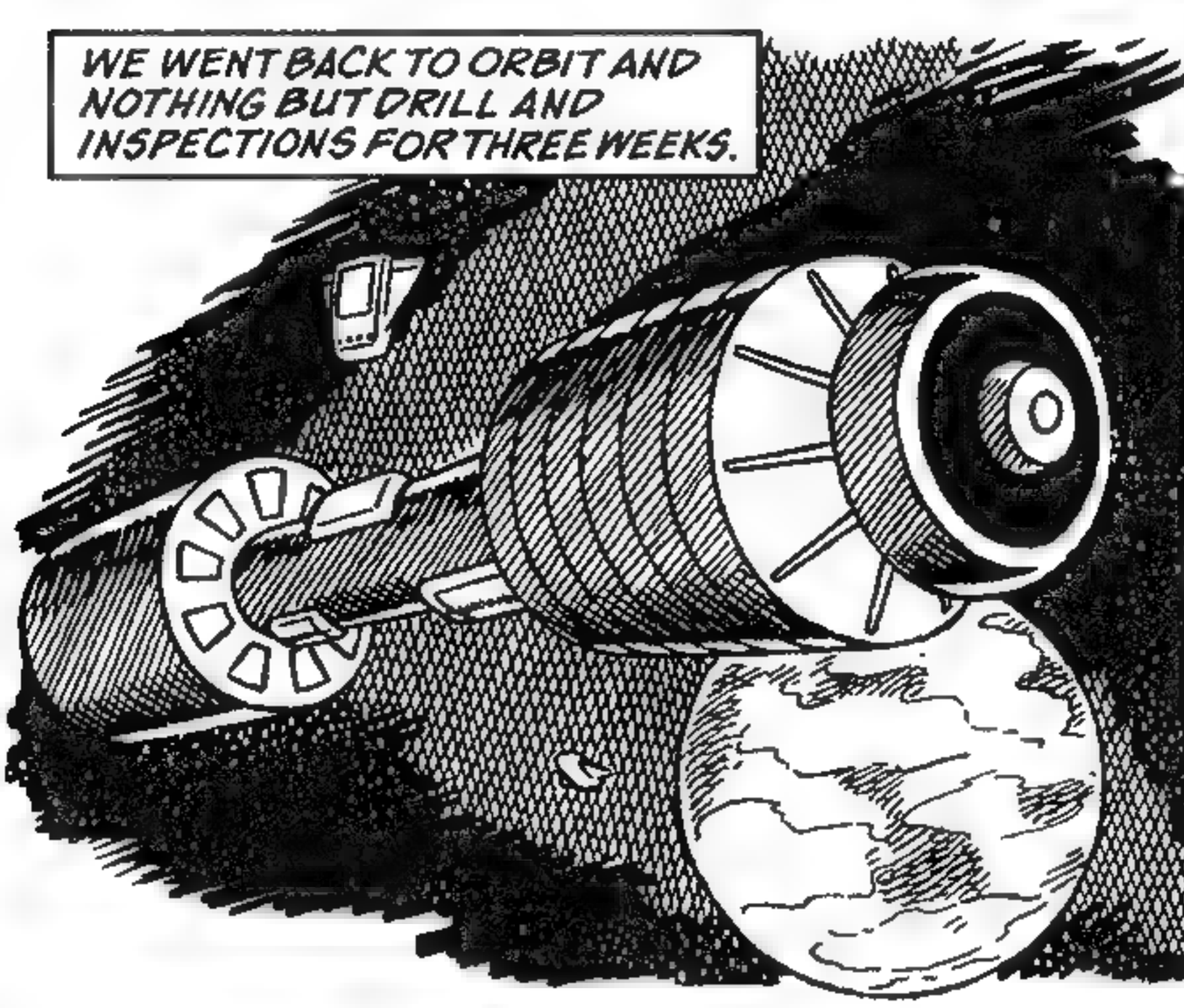
MUD PEOPLE... NOT REAL.

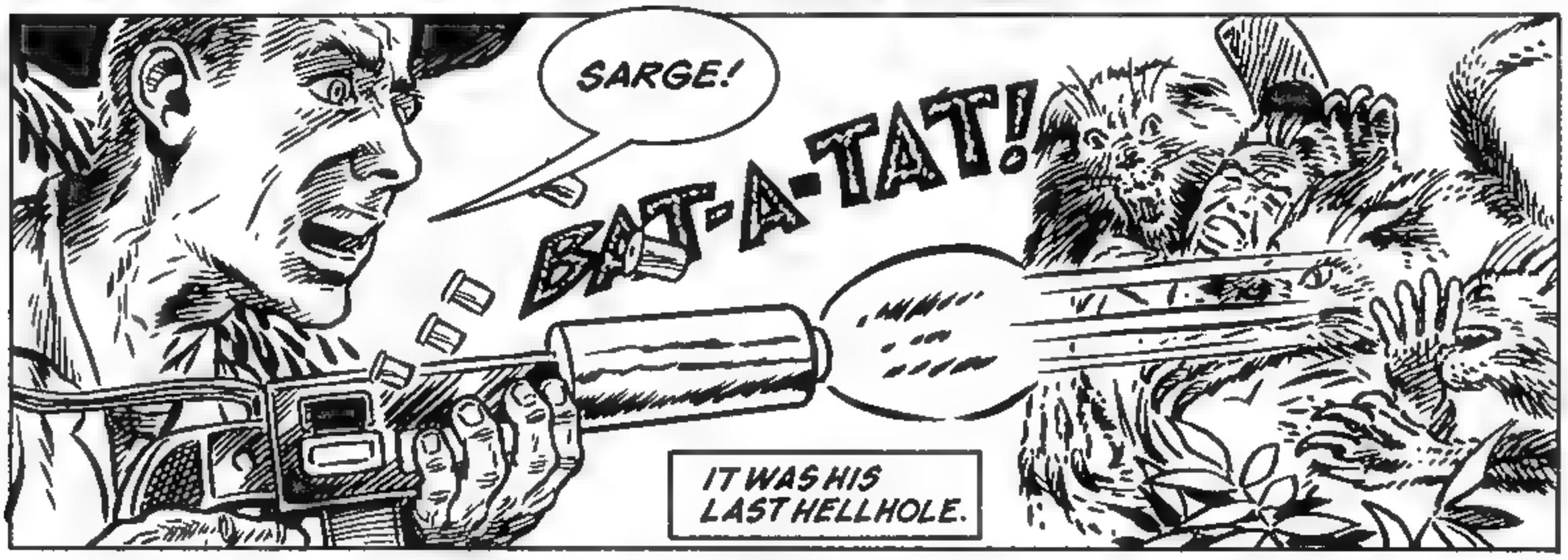
IT GOT ME THROUGH THE EURASIAN WAR. I SAW AND DID THINGS THAT WOULD'VE BEEN HORRIBLE WITH REAL PEOPLE.
BUT THEY WEREN'T REAL AND I DIDN'T GET SICK AGAIN.


FOUR YEARS AND OUT I HAD PLANNED, BUT AFTER THE EURASIAN CAMPAIGN THEY SHOWED US VIDS OF THE MARTIANS. THE HAZARD PAY AND OFF-WORLD BONUSES WERE TOO GOOD TO PASS.
MAN, THEY AIN'T EVEN MUD PEOPLE.
HUH! THEY NEED KILLIN'!


MARS WAS A PICNIC.

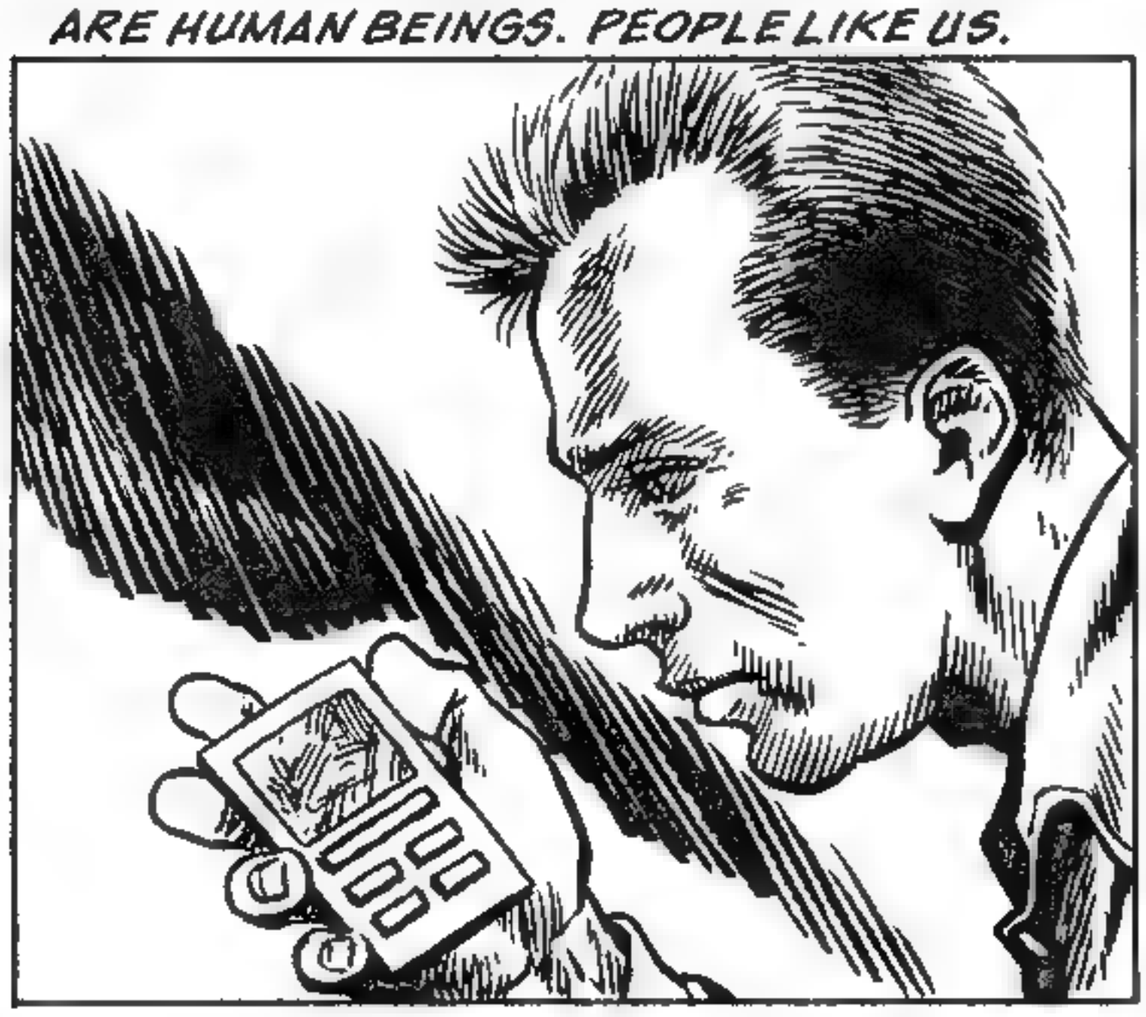
IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE TWO WEEKS VACATION, BUT SARGE SAID SOMETHING BIG WAS UP.



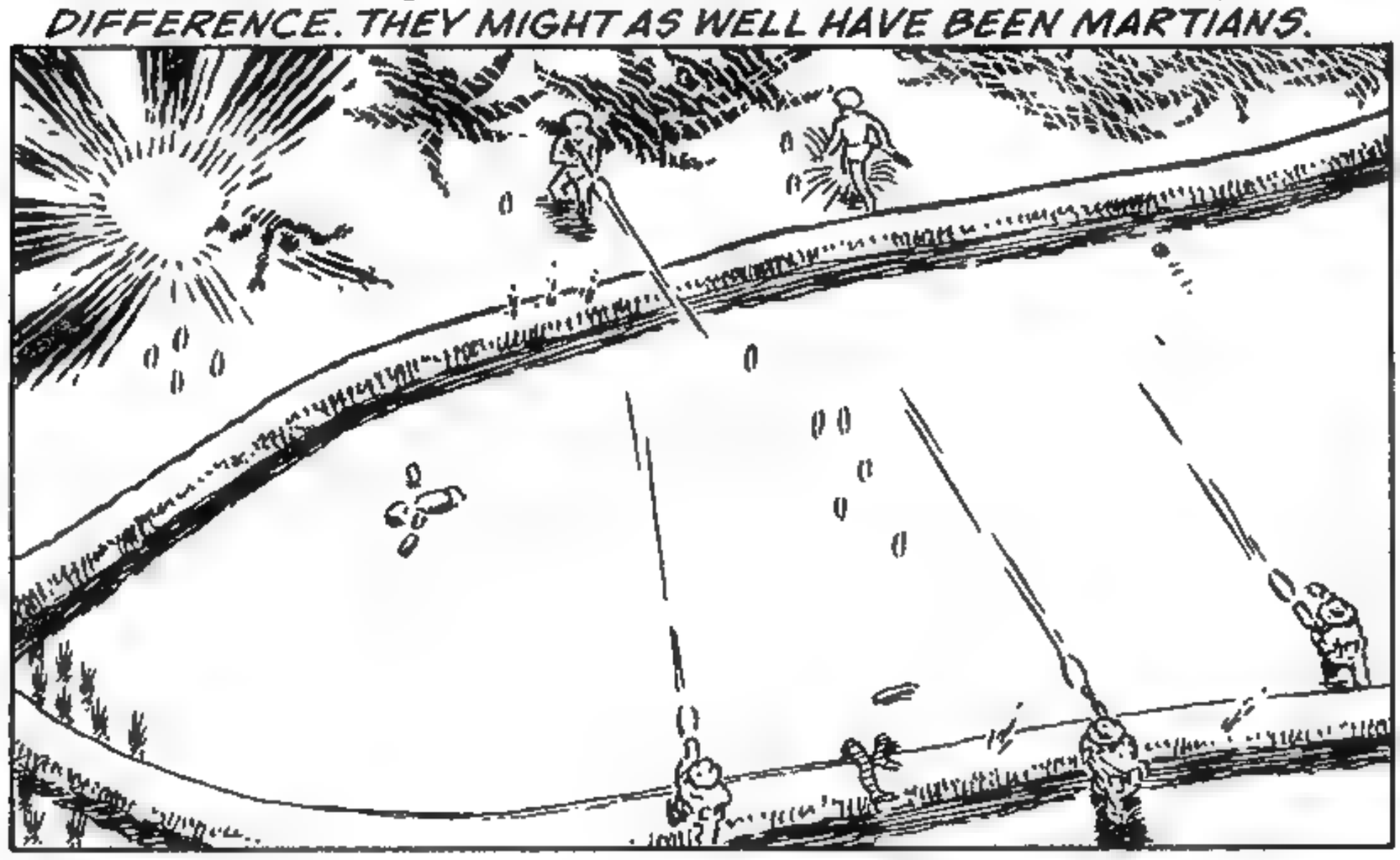


THE DELTANS WERE FAST AND HARD TO KILL. THERE WERE SO MANY OF THEM. HELL, THEY WEREN'T EVEN MARTIANS. THEY WERE ANIMALS. STILL, THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT THEM.

WE CLEANED THEM OUT. STILL, IT WOULD'VE BEEN ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU SICK...
...IF THEY'D BEEN HUMAN.

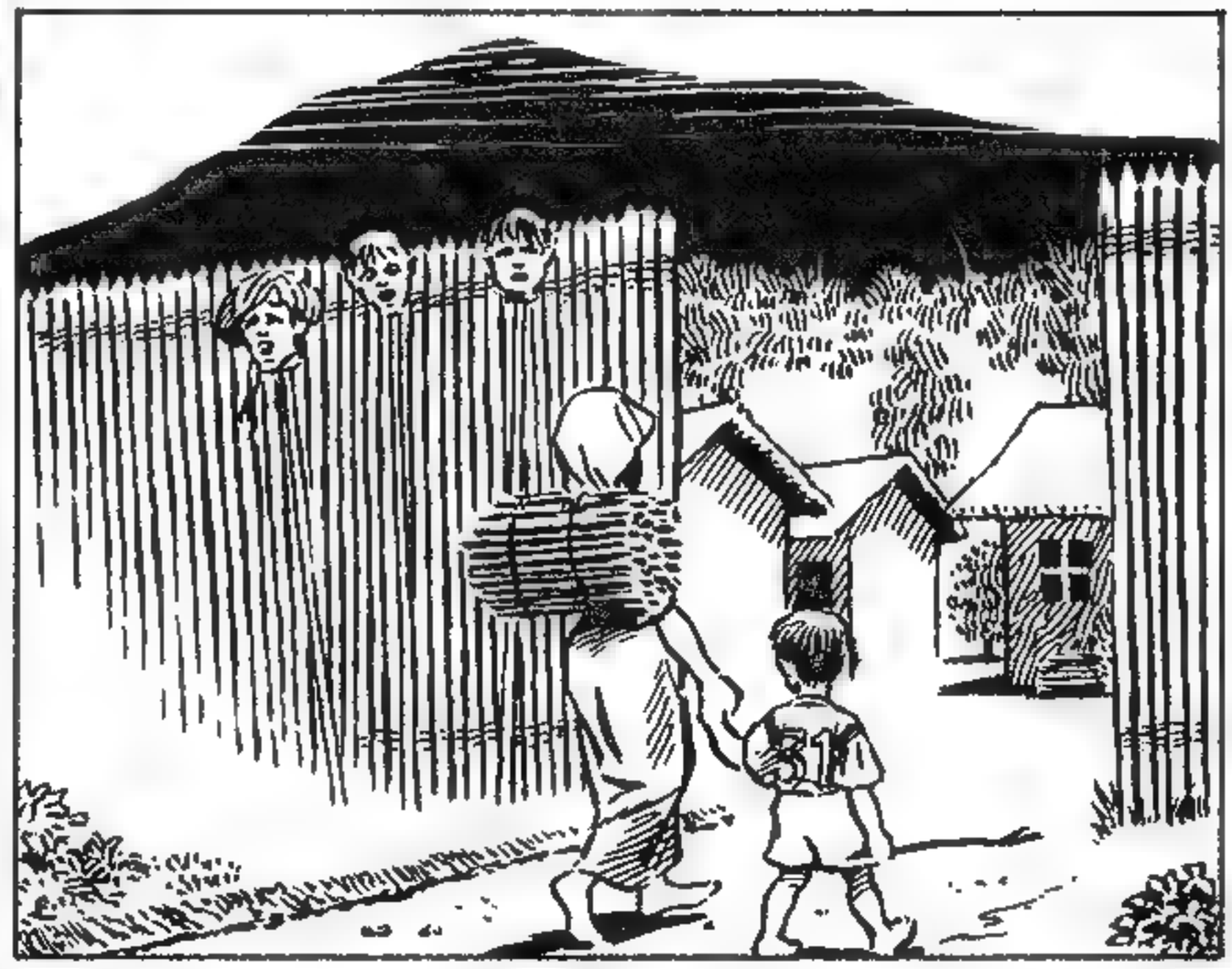

OUR NEXT MISSION WAS ON EARTH AGAIN. HOME... THE REAL WORLD WHERE THERE ARE HUMAN BEINGS. PEOPLE LIKE US.

REAL PEOPLE.
PLAY
STOP


WE WENT IN TO GREASE SOME MONKEYS GIVING OUR SIDE SOME TROUBLE WITH A GOLD MINE OR AN OIL FIELD. IT MADE NO DIFFERENCE. THEY MIGHT AS WELL HAVE BEEN MARTIANS.

THEY COULDN'T EVEN SPEAK OUR LANGUAGE.
SURRENDUR! I SURRENDUR!

...AND EVEN IF THEY DID, THEY WERE STILL JUST MUD PEOPLE.

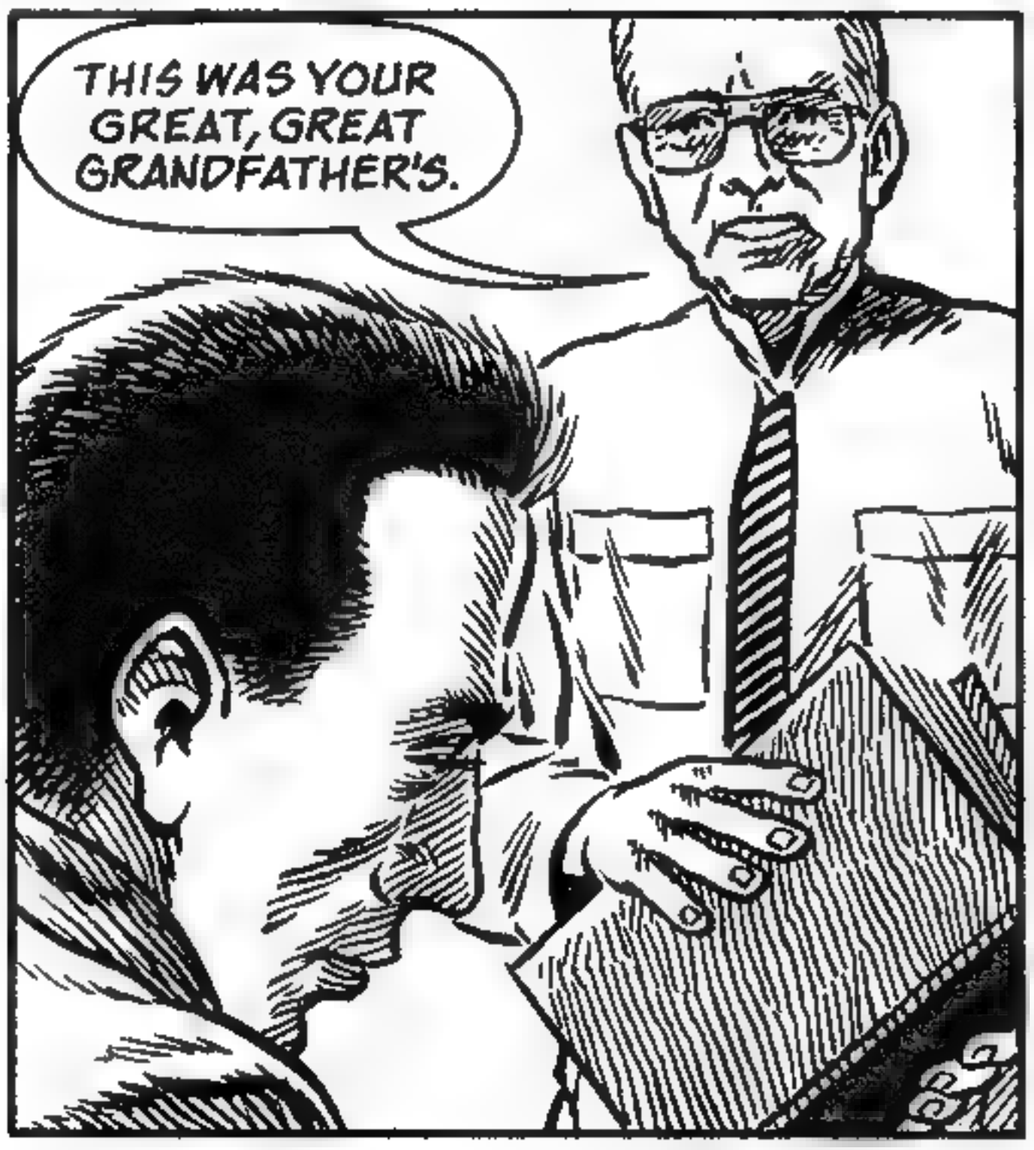


HOME. MY FAMILY. REAL PEOPLE.

MY TOUR WAS OVER, MONEY IN THE BANK AND I WASN'T COMING HOME EMPTY-HANDED.

I BROUGHT HOME SOUVENIRS FOR EVERYONE, BUT NO ONE SEEMED TO LIKE THEM.

ANTHONY, I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING.

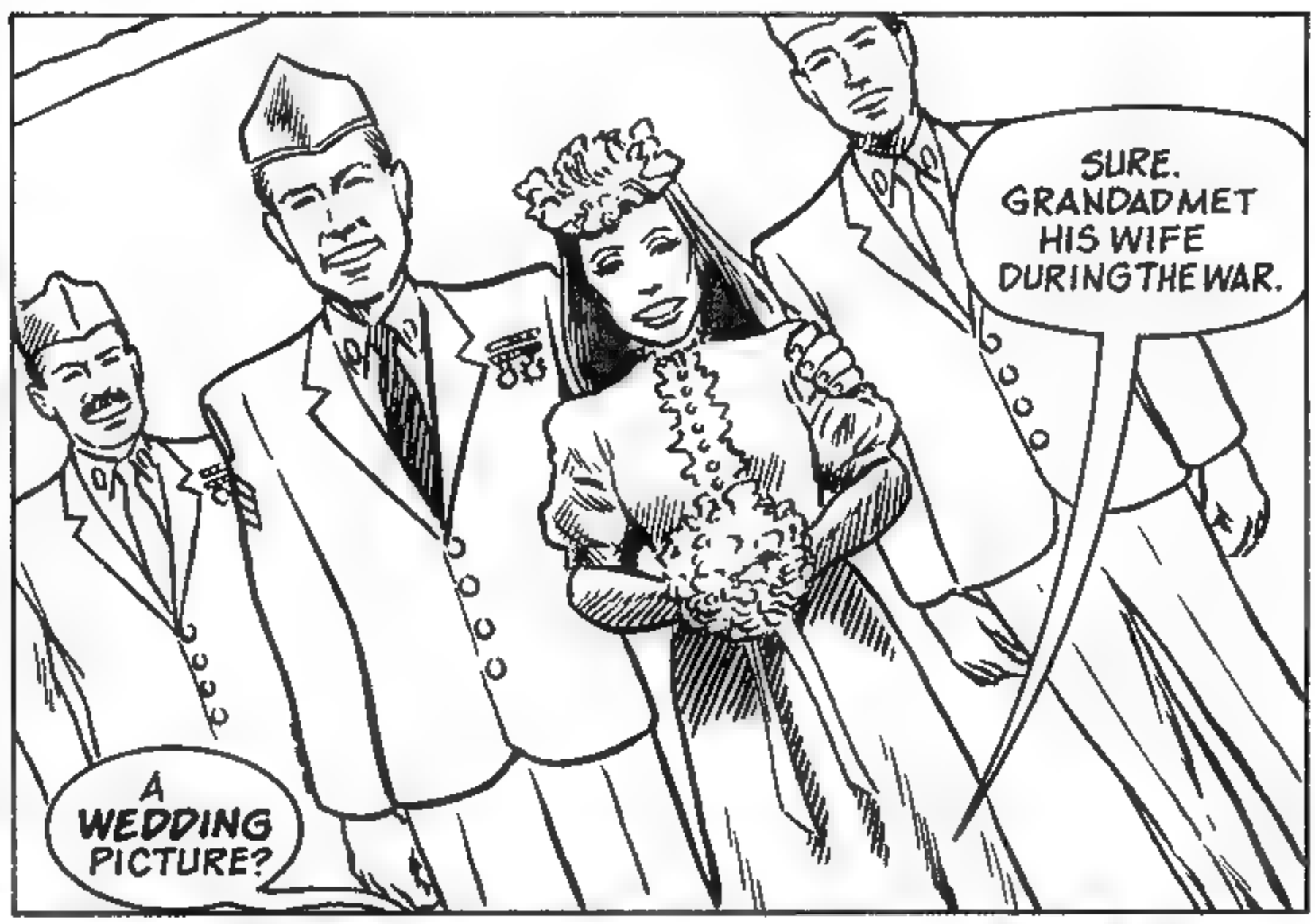

THIS WAS YOUR GREAT, GREAT GRANDFATHER'S.

HE WAS IN THE OLD CENTRAL AMERICAN CAMPAIGN.

THAT'S HIM.

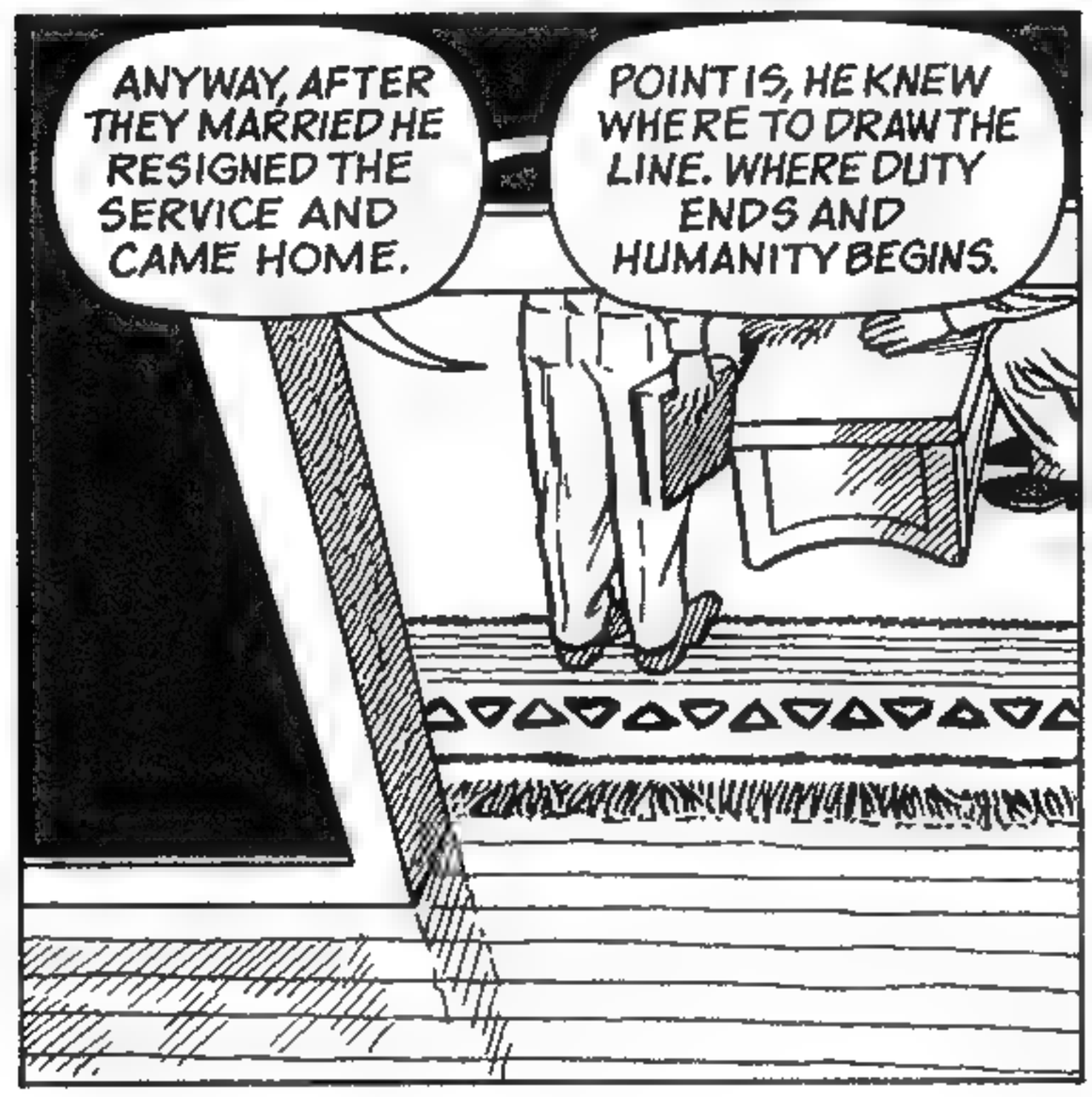
HE SHOWED THESE TO YOUR GRANDFATHER WHEN HE THOUGHT THE TIME WAS RIGHT.

WHAT'S THIS?

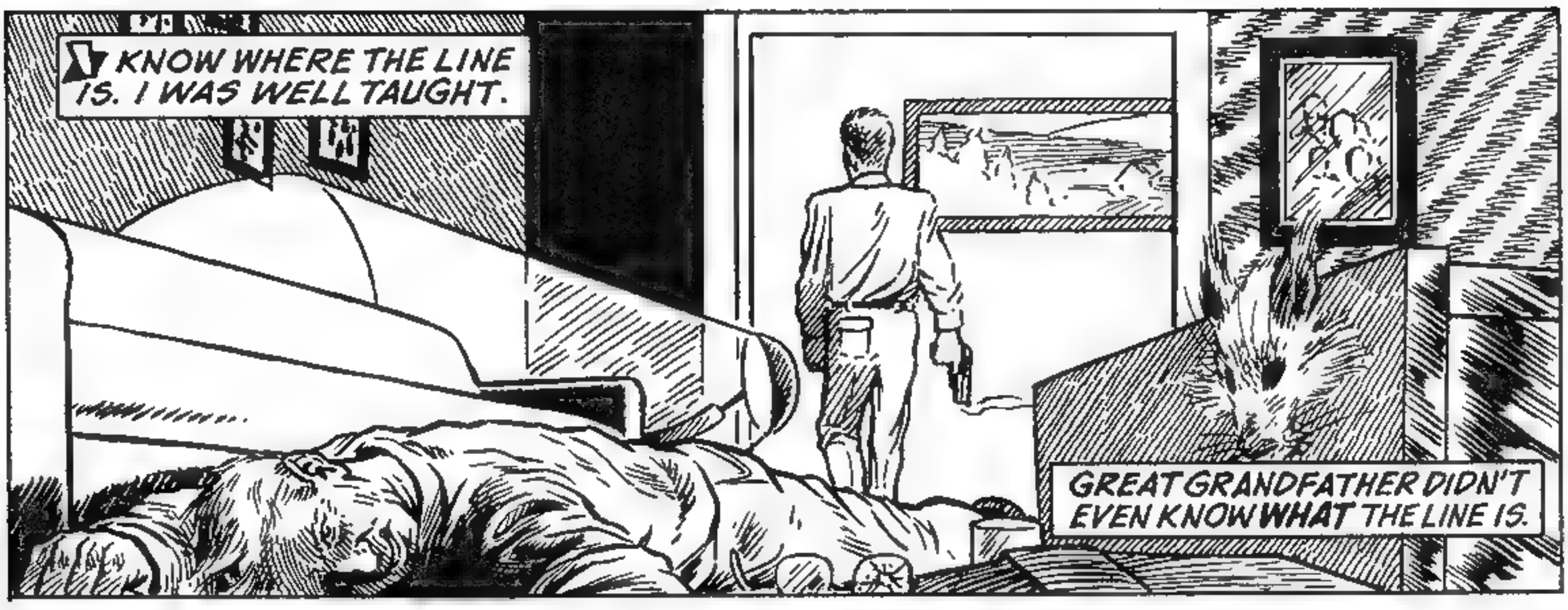

SURE. GRANDAD MET HIS WIFE DURING THE WAR.
A WEDDING PICTURE?

HE MARRIED A GOOK?
NO! NO! THEY DIDN'T CALL THEM GOOKS IN THAT WAR, BUT, YES, HE MARRIED A GUATEMALAN GIRL.

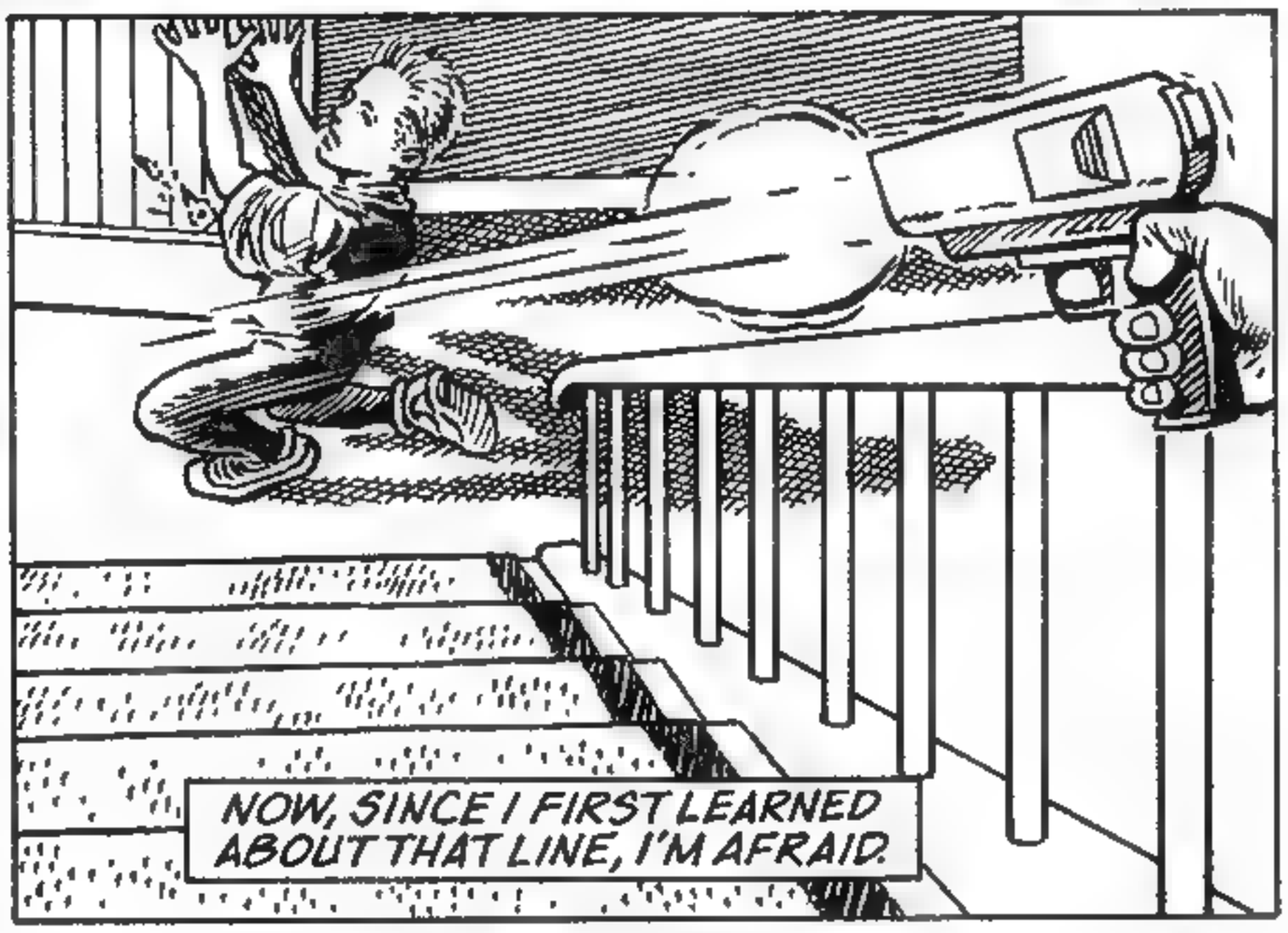
HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE KILLING 'EM, NOT...
WELL... LOVE IS NOT SO ...PREDICTABLE.

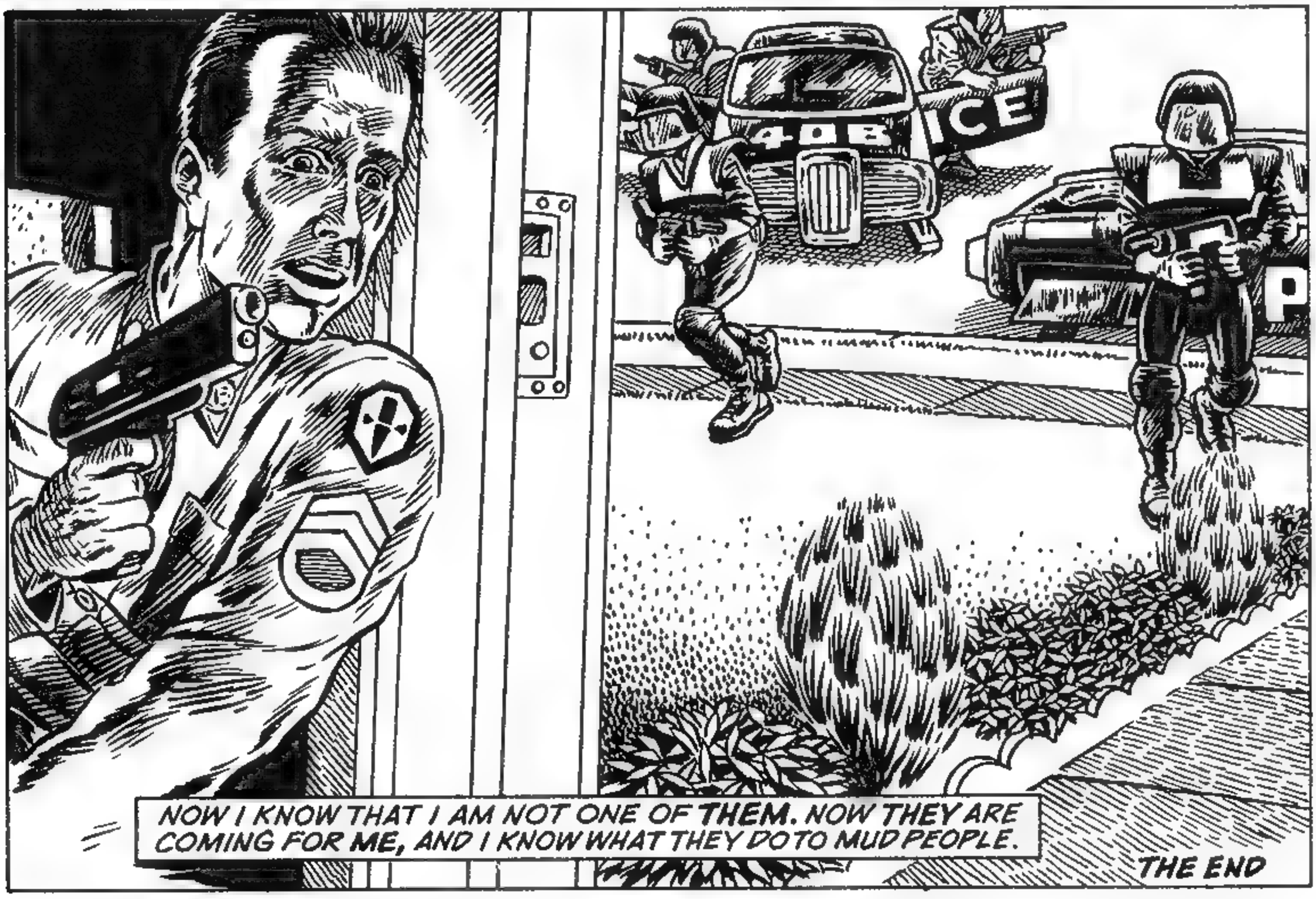

ANYWAY, AFTER THEY MARRIED HE RESIGNED THE SERVICE AND CAME HOME.
POINT IS, HE KNEW WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE. WHERE DUTY ENDS AND HUMANITY BEGINS.

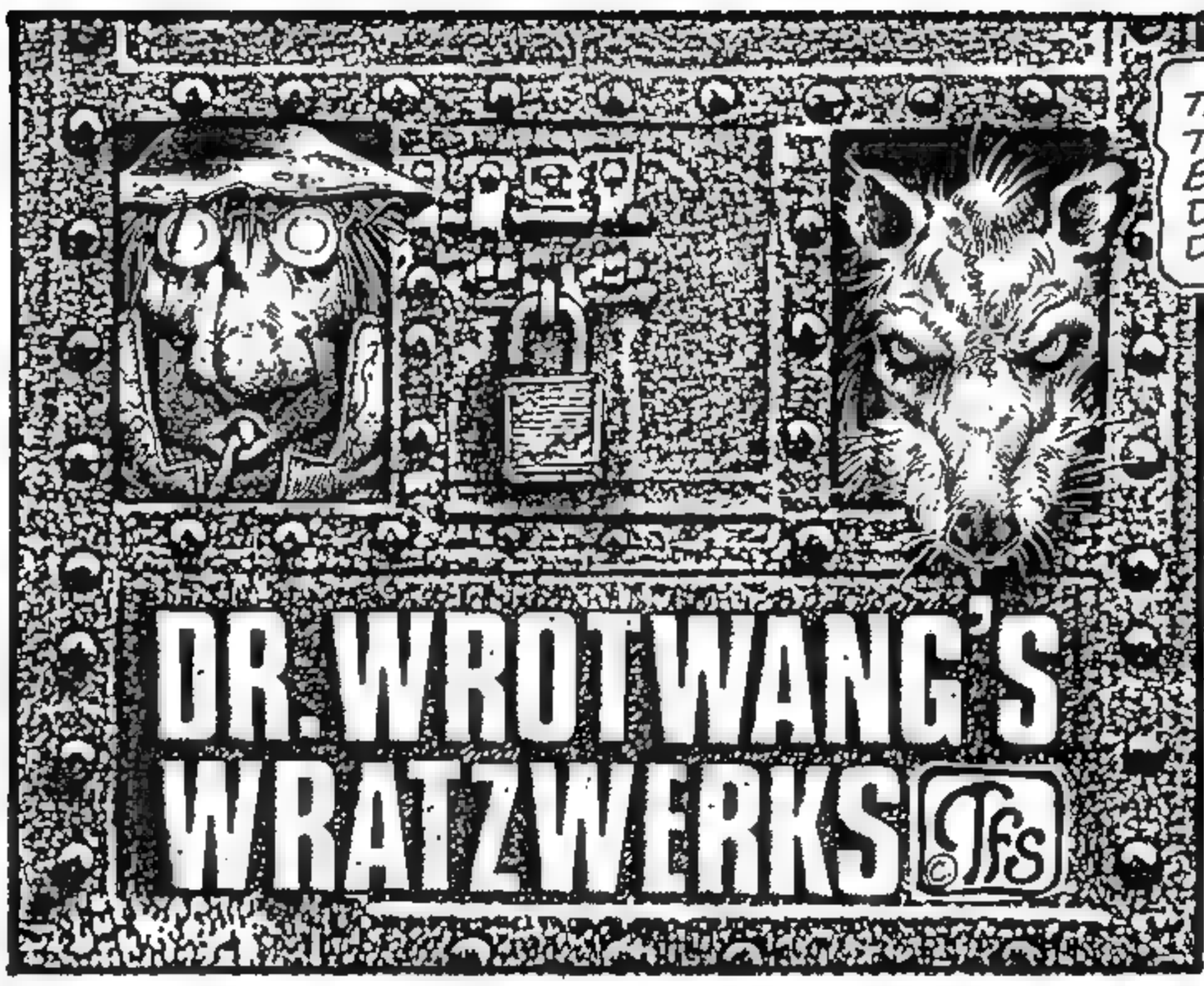
SHE WAS ONE OF THEM!


I KNOW WHERE THE LINE IS. I WAS WELL TAUGHT.
GREAT GRANDFATHER DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THE LINE IS.

NOW I KNOW THAT WE ARE ALL ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THAT LINE.


NOW, SINCE I FIRST LEARNED ABOUT THAT LINE, I'M AFRAID.


NOW I KNOW THAT I AM NOT ONE OF THEM. NOW THEY ARE COMING FOR ME, AND I KNOW WHAT THEY DO TO MUD PEOPLE.
THE END


DR. WROTWANG'S WRATZWERKS
©TFS

THERE! A LITTLE SUB DURAL TISSUE. RELAX, IT'S NOT YOUR BRAIN I'M AFTER, IT'S THAT DAMN ELUSIVE MIND, THE DREAM STUFF,...MEMORY!
SHARED MEMORY BEYOND THE OCEAN SPAWN...

COLLECTIVE MEMORY MIND POOL. MY KIND LOST IT WITH THE KNOWING OF FIRE,..

...THE MAKING OF TOOLS...TRADED OUR LINK TO CREATION FOR DIGITAL WATCHES!

HUMANS MUST AT LEAST KNOW WHAT THEY ARE... MUST KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW, LITTLE BROTHER. AND,.. AND,...

OH, YES AND THE SECRET OF THE RATS!

THE RATS!

OHNN.. RATS, RATS, RATS,... OHH. FAT RATS, WHITE, BROWN-BLACK...

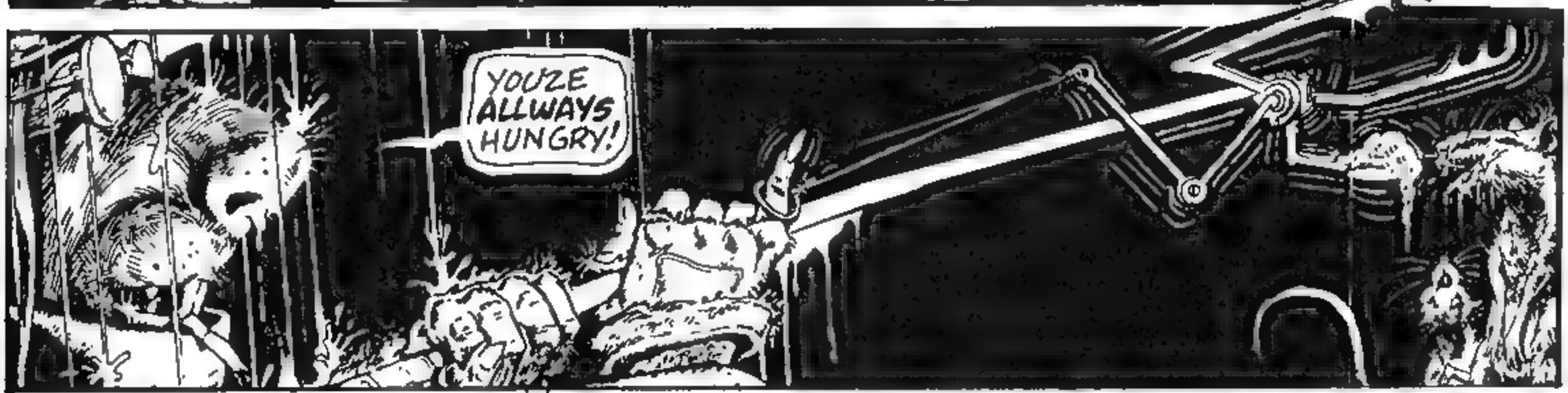
OH RATS AND RATS, HERE COME OL COUSIN WRATZ.

...COME TO PLAY...TO TAKE YOU ALL AWAY!

OL' WRATZ KNOW'S, YESSS... YOU GUYS KNOWS ALL A KINDA STUFF, SCAREY, SECRET STUFF,... MEBBE KNOW WHY WRATZ BAD SCARED TODAY?

OH, YAZ. YOU DO.

NO MATTER, WE BEST GET AT IT. TIME TO GO UPSTAIRS, TIME TO SEE THE DOC, YESSS...
WRATZ GOT WHATCHA LIKE RIGHT HERE, YOU REAL HUNGRY AINTCHA?


YOU'ZE ALLWAYS HUNGRY!

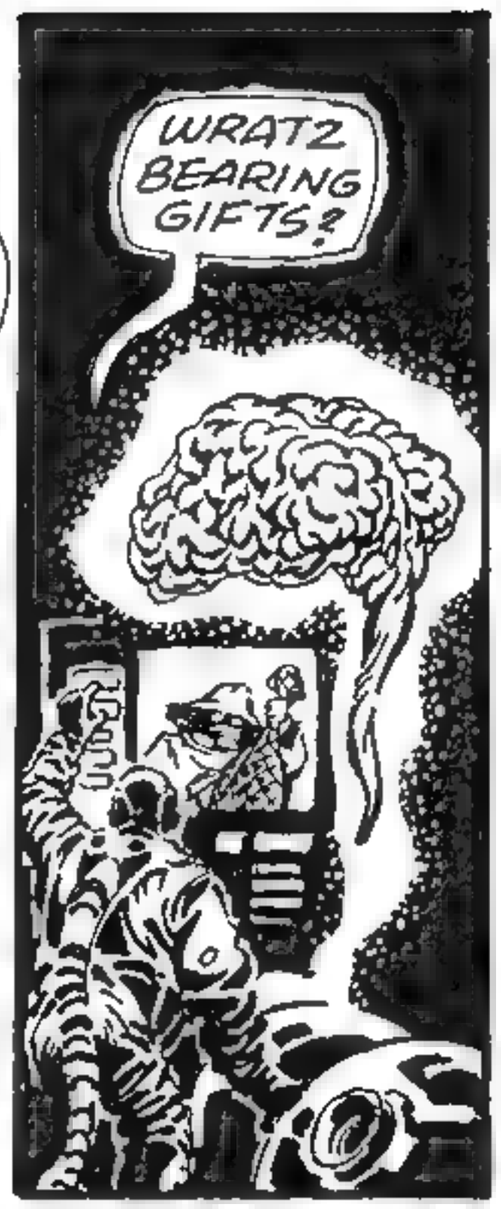
I KNOWS IT'S NICE AND DARK AND SAFE DOWN HERE, BUT WRATZ GOT HIS WORK TO DO.

BAAD. THEM ALL LOOKS BHAAD AT WRATZ.

WRATZ GOOD RATCATCHER, WRATZ NOT BHAAAD!

WHY WRATZ FEEL SCAREY 'FRAID,-BAAD, COUSINS? ALWAYS FEEL GOOD DOWN BELOW...
KEEP OUT

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!
SO MUCH TO DO, SO LITTLE TIME. WHA? ALARM!
EEP! EEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!


WRATZ BEARING GIFTS?

COME THROUGH, OLD COMRADE, HEH! A FULL BAG!
GATE OPEN
DOOR

WHAT WRONG THIS DAY? THEM ALL LOOK BHAAD AT WRATZ.
RATZ DO HIS JOB. DO DAMN GOOD JOB!

SKEEE SKEEE EEEE

SKEEK! STOP! HEAD PAIN— OHHH!

NO!
MASSIVE POWER OVER LOAD! NO!

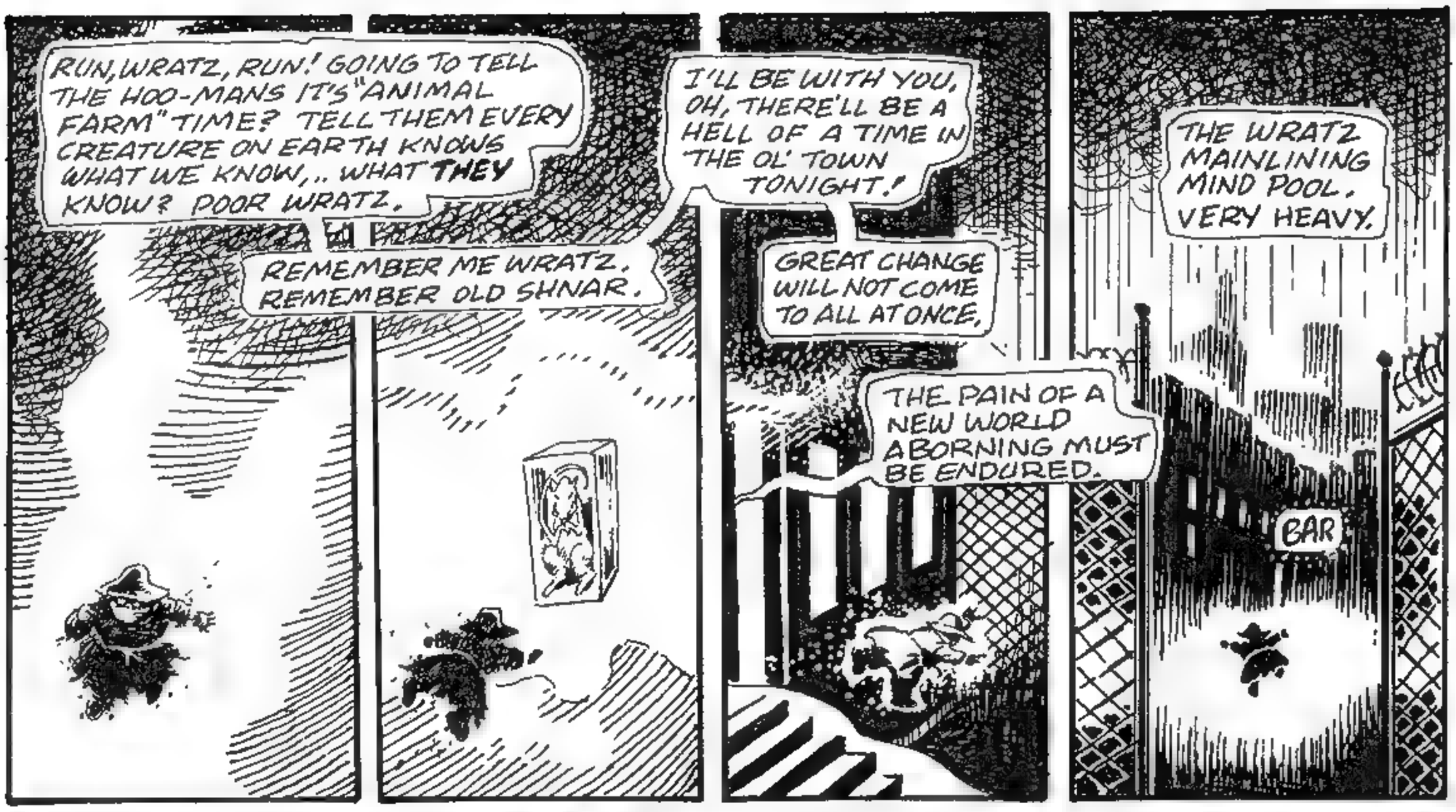
CONTACT! RELEASE! AEONS OF CONSTRAINED PSYCHIC ENERGY EXPLODE THROUGH THE LAB.
WHOOOSH

THERE HAVE BEEN SOME CHANGES, WRATZ. I HAVE ACCESSED THE GREAT MIND POOL OF ALL CREATURES BACK TO THE VERY BIRTH OF LIFE!

I'M SO DAMN SMART NOW I COULD CHANGE THE WORLD FOREVER!

I THINK I'LL GET STARTED RIGHT NOW!

SAY GOODNIGHT, WRATZ...


RUN, WRATZ, RUN! GOING TO TELL THE HOO-MANS IT'S "ANIMAL FARM" TIME? TELL THEM EVERY CREATURE ON EARTH KNOWS WHAT WE KNOW,.. WHAT THEY KNOW? POOR WRATZ.
REMEMBER ME WRATZ. REMEMBER OLD SHNAR.
I'LL BE WITH YOU. OH, THERE'LL BE A HELL OF A TIME IN THE OL' TOWN TONIGHT!
GREAT CHANGE WILL NOT COME TO ALL AT ONCE,
THE PAIN OF A NEW WORLD ABORNING MUST BE ENDURED.
THE WRATZ MAINLINING MIND POOL. VERY HEAVY.
BAR

ALL SEWED UP AN' HURTIN' THEY WUZ, AND THEN THIS GHOSTIE SPOOK RAT, HIC! H-HE SAYS WROTWANG'S CHANGED EVERYTHING, HIC!
DEARIE, MY ADVICE, YOU GET THE UNEMPLOYMENT AND EASE UP ON THE BOOZE.
HEY, SAM! ANOTHER ROUND!

YOU BELLOWED, OH GREAT ONE?
HI YA, WRATZ.
WRATZ, YOU DRUNK AGAIN?
HE SAY'S IT'S THE END OF THE FRIGGIN' WORLD. GOTTA DRINK TO THAT.

S-S-SCARED... YOU DIDN'T SEE, ALL CUT UP THEY WUZ, BUNNIES, SQUIRRELS, MONKEYS... HIC! OH, OH...
WROTWANG STOLE THEIR B-B. BRAINS — HIC! OHH...
A FUCKIN' VIVISECTIONIST DICKLESS SCUMBAG!
UH-WRATZ DON'T WORK THERE NO MORE, HIC!
THE DIRTY RAT! HOW'S ABOUT OUR DRINKS, SAM?
DUTCH SPLIT BEER
NUTS! WE'RE GONNA DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS! POOR LIL' FUR BALLS.
HEY, YOU ASSHOLES, WE'RE OFF TO MEET SOME OTHER ANIMALS!

THE WHOLE PLACE IS LIT UP.
I WISH I WAS!
WRATZ GO HOME NOW... HIC!

GAWD! IT STINKS IN HERE!
HEY, SAM, NOBODY HOME, RIGHT. LET'S GO.
THE LIGHT... IT'S FLUID!
SEE,.. SEE..

CREEPY SHIT! I HATE CREEPY SHIT!
OH, JEEZ! I'M GONNA BARF!
BETTER NOT, ANNIE, IT MIGHT PISS HIM OFF!
SEE! WRATZ TOLD TRUE!

A DARK NIGHT FOR DARK AND WILD WORK AYE, LADIES AND WRATZ?
WHY DO YOU BRING ME HOO-MANS, WRATZ?
TO JOIN OUR PAR-TEE?
I SHOW THEM WRATZ NO DO THIS,..THIS THING!
AHH... BUT YOU DID, WRATZ. OH YES INDEEDY. AHH,... TRAPPING, SNARING, TAKING US ALL TO THE DOCTOR.
BUT I NOT KNOW...
OF COURSE NOT. YOUR TINY MIND COULD NOT CONCEIVE WHAT WAS REALLY HAPPENING.
AND YOU BRING THESE TO WITNESS YOUR HOO-MAN COMPASSION?
SO WHERE'S WROTWANG?

OH, HE'S AROUND SOMEWHERE... SOMEWHEN...
WRATZ, YOU ARE NEITHER RODENT OR HOO-MAN.
THERE IS LITTLE TIME, I MUST AWAKEN YOU.
ANNIE COULD USE A WAKE-UP CALL WHILE YOU'RE AT IT.

HEY! YOU'LL BE SORRY YOU DID THAT! HE SMELLS WORSE WHEN HE'S DRUNK!

WRATZ CREATURE, YOU ARE REBORN!

HEY! DON'T YOU HURT HIM!

HARM THIS TINKERED TOGETHER JUMP START TO A NEW WORLD? FOOLISH HOO-MAN,

IN THE LOOP NOW, OL' WRATZ! TIME'S UP. SPIT HIM OUT!! NOT ONLY DOES HE STINK, BUT HE TASTES AWFUL!

WRATZ GOING TO HAVE ONE HELL OF A HANGOVER!

C'MON WRATZ, LET'S BOOGIE. I FOUND WROTWANGS NOTES.

HELP ME WITH ANNIE. HURRY!

GIGGLE ≈ HIC! ≈ PARTY! ≈ HIC! ≈

IN-VEST-IGATE.

IN-TER-ESTING.

SEPA-RATE.

DIS-SECT.

CUT-CUT-

GO! SPREAD AND MULTIPLY.

WRATZ AND I, SHNAR, HELP YOU ALWAYS.

WRATZ WILL GUIDE YOU.

ME?

LEGGO! ≈ UMPH! ≈

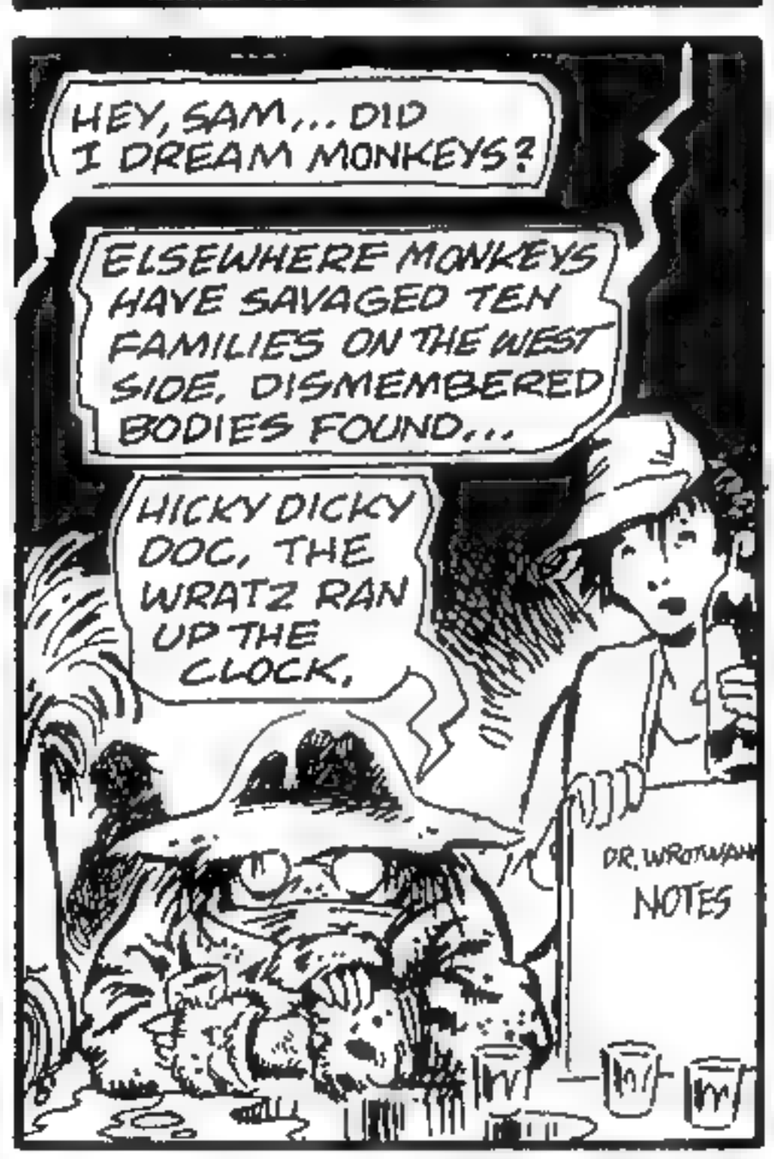
A DICKHEAD WITH GOGGLES, DR. WROTWANG, I PRESUME.

UNCOUTH CREATURE, SURRENDER THAT NOTE BOOK AT ONCE!

SCREW YOU, DOC!

LOWLY CRETIN! YOU CANNOT POSSIBLY COMPREHEND...

LIKE YOU SAID, DOC, TIME TO GO!



To Be Continued...

KLEMDIGGERS

STORY/ART © MATT HOWARTH

OHO, MARLI! THERE'RE KLEMS APLENTY FOR THE PICKING!

KLEM n. 1. ANY ARTIFACT BELONGING TO THE PINKWIND GALACTIC REGIME (5001-8004), PARTICULARLY THOSE OBJECTS OF A TECHNOLOGICAL NATURE.

THAT'S AFF, KENTON. EASY PICKINGS.

-EH?-

FLASH

WHAT WAS THAT—?

KENNY?!

KENTON?

KENNY!

SWEET ULL, WHAT HAPPENED ? KENNY — SPEAK TO ME, KENNY!

WHAT WAS — -GASP!-

NO!

-KENTON! OH NO —

HE ISN'T GOING TO BE OKAY... IS HE, TAB ?

CYGNUS! WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?

THERE WAS A FLASH... HE'S DEAD...

HE IS DEAD, ISN'T HE, TAB?

OH YEAH... HE'S DEAD.

I THINK THE KLEM WENT OFF...

HUH?

THE FLASH ... I THINK IT WAS THE KLEM...

BUT — THEY DON'T DO THAT, MARLI.

WELL, THIS TIME IT DID... I THINK...

OKAY OKAY, SOMETHING HAPPENED... WE SHOULD ...UH... GET BACK TO THE SHIP...

RIGHT?

KLEMDIGGERS pl. n. 1. THE POPULARIST NAME GIVEN TO THE PRIVATEER SALVAGE CREWS WHICH SEARCHED FOR ARTIFACTS OF THE PINKWIND REGIME IN THE VERMILLION-5 NEBULA FROM 9437 TO 10125.

GRAKE, TABHOHF! WHY'D YOU RECALL US EARLY?

THIS PLACE IS A TREASURE TROVE!

I GOT WORRIED, BAXTER.

SOB

SOB

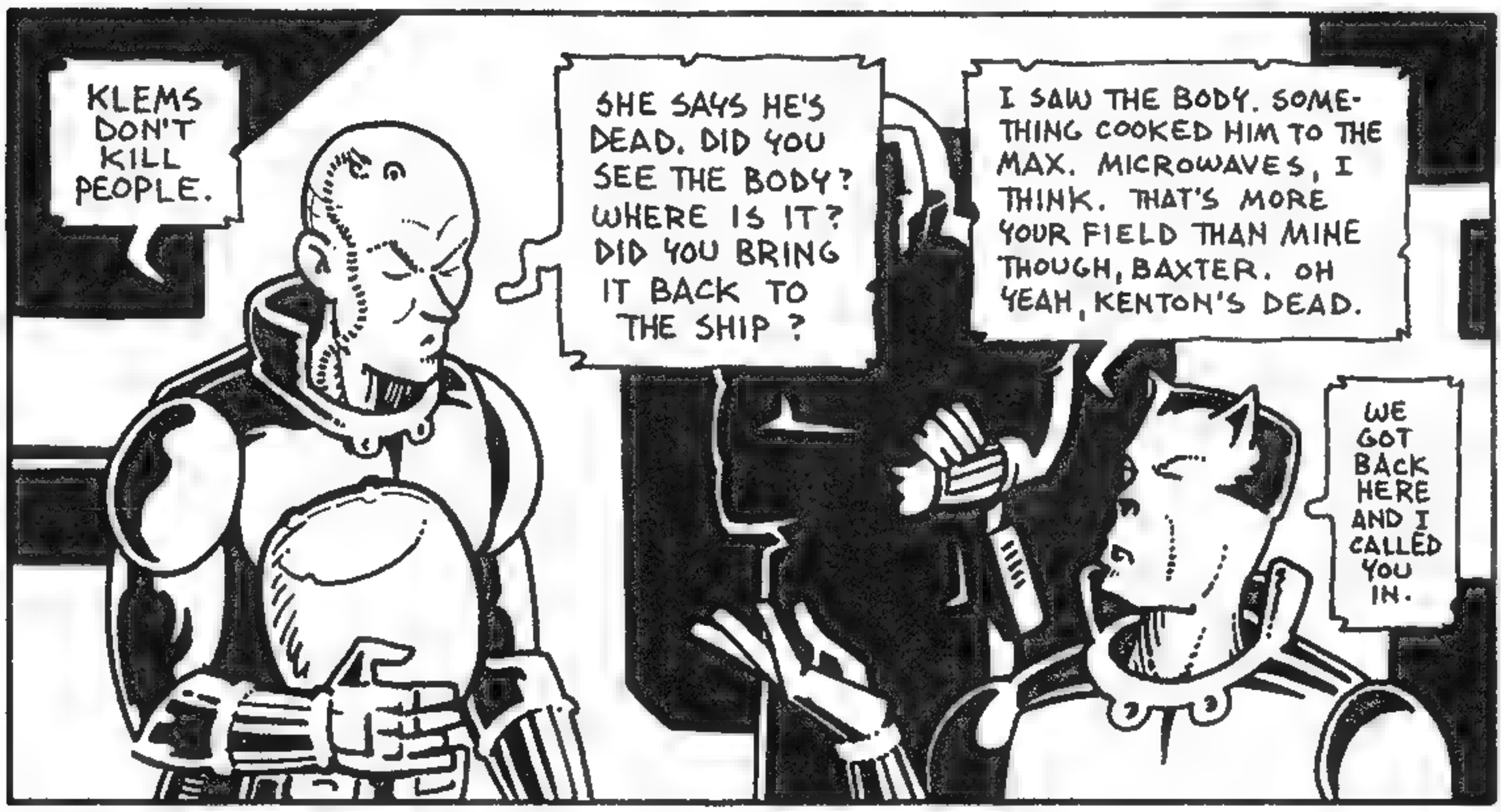
SOB

WORRIED ABOUT WHAT? WORRIED THAT SLUDD AND I MIGHT FIND MORE KLEMS THAN YOU?

MARLI'S CRYING...
BLUNT! WHAT DID KENTON DO TO HER THIS TIME?

WELL, BAXTER... IT SEEMS OUR CAPTAIN WENT AND DIED ON HER.

-SOB-THERE WAS A FLASH AND HE-SOB-HE WAS DEAD-THIS KLEM DID IT-CHOKE-SOB


KLEMS DON'T KILL PEOPLE.
SHE SAYS HE'S DEAD. DID YOU SEE THE BODY? WHERE IS IT? DID YOU BRING IT BACK TO THE SHIP?
I SAW THE BODY. SOMETHING COOKED HIM TO THE MAX. MICROWAVES, I THINK. THAT'S MORE YOUR FIELD THAN MINE THOUGH, BAXTER. OH YEAH, KENTON'S DEAD.
WE GOT BACK HERE AND I CALLED YOU IN.

SO YOU RAN AWAY AND LEFT HIS BODY BEHIND...

HEY, IF A KLEM DID KILL KENTON, ANOTHER ONE MIGHT'VE GONE OFF ANY SECOND! I HAD TO GET MARLI SAFELY BACK TO THE SHIP!
KLEMS DON'T KILL PEOPLE.

WHAT'RE YOU GETTING AT, BAXTER?

KLEMS DON'T KILL PEOPLE. PEOPLE KILL PEOPLE. PEOPLE WITH GRUDGES... PEOPLE WHO LOST THEIR WOMAN TO KENTON PERHAPS.
RUPTURE YOU, BAXTER!
YOU WANT TO SEE THE BODY?
OKAY!

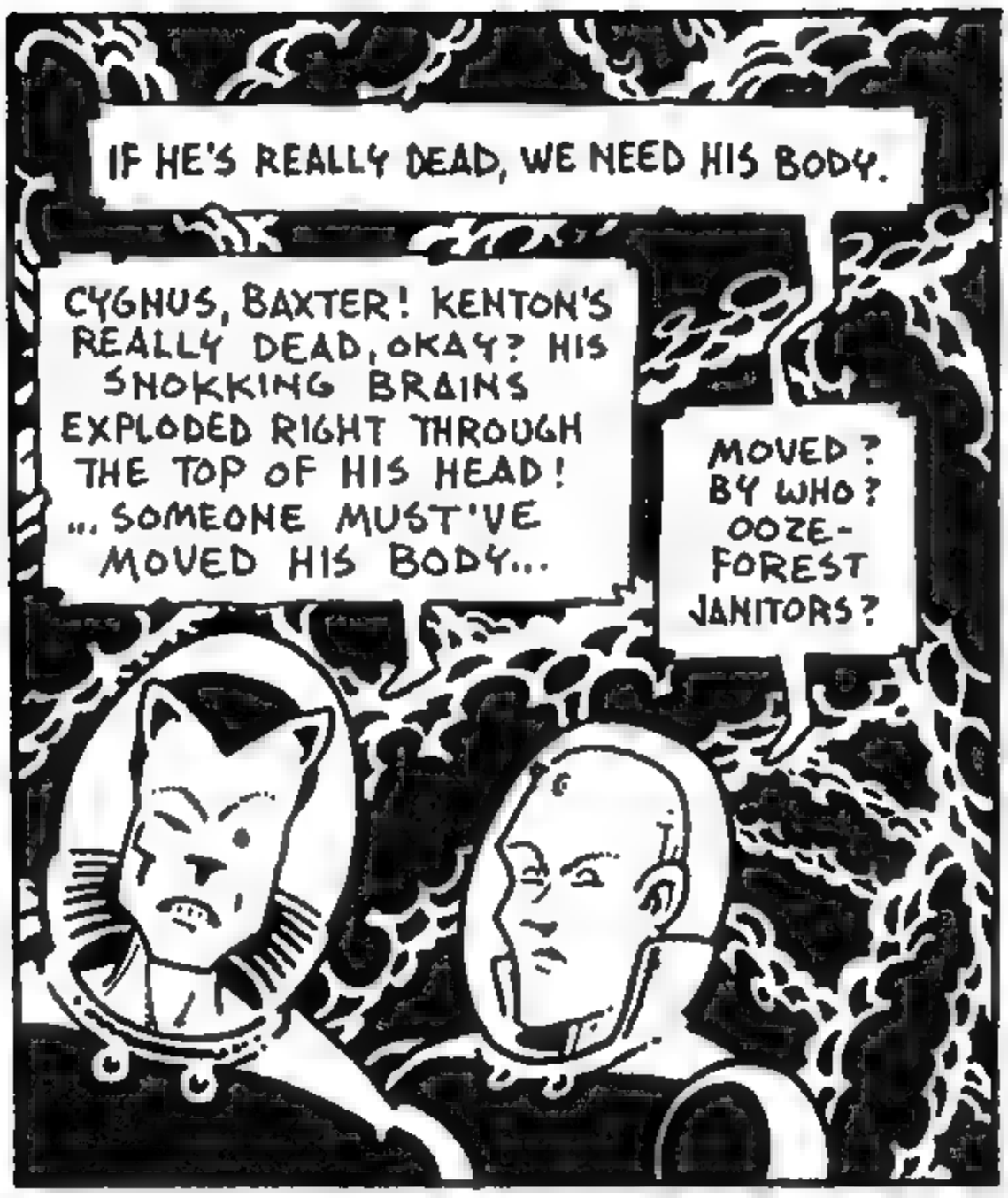
WILL YOU BE ALL RIGHT WHILE I'M GONE, MARLI?
AFF, I SUPPOSE.

COME ON, YOU GHOUL. LET'S GO.
HMF.

IT'S RIGHT UP AHEAD HERE.

HUH—WHAT?! BUT—HE WAS HERE! HE WAS RIGHT HERE!
YOU'RE CERTAIN THIS IS THE CORRECT SPOT?
IT'S ALL A VAST STICKY MAZE TO ME.

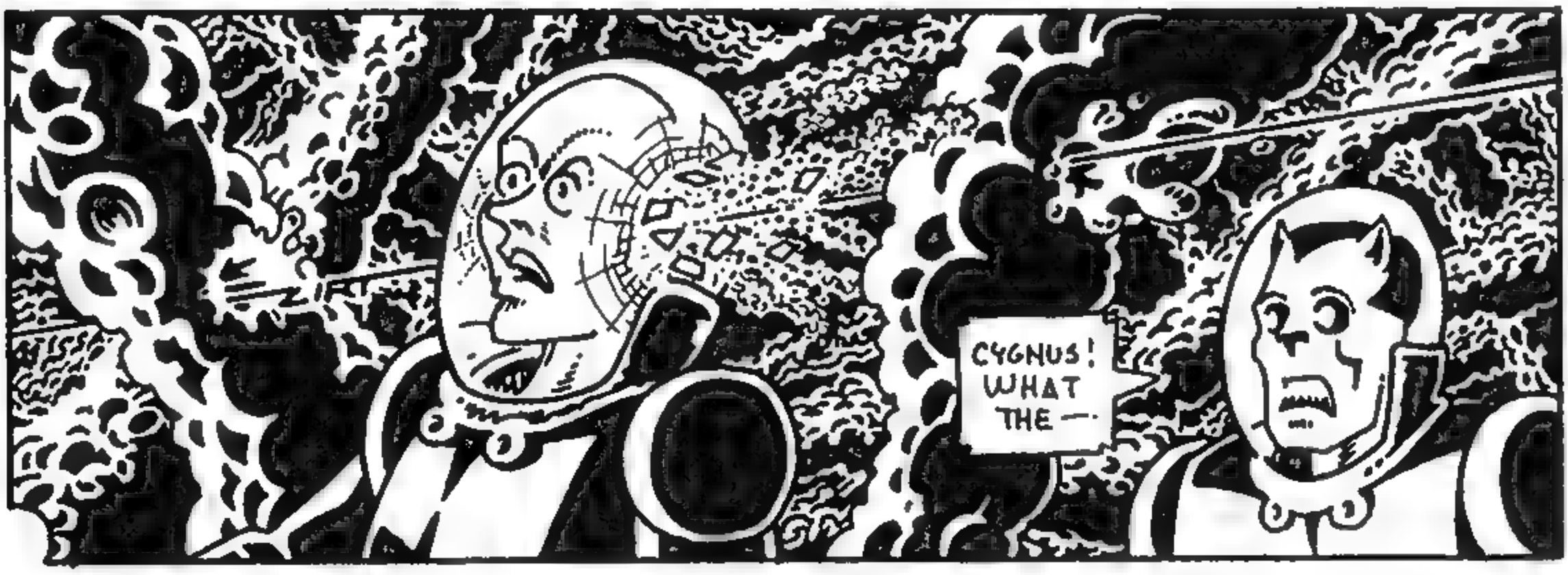
LOOK—HERE'S THE TRACER I DROPPED... AND THAT'S THE KLEM THAT WENT OFF.
THIS IS THE RIGHT SPOT.


IF HE'S REALLY DEAD, WE NEED HIS BODY.
CYGNUS, BAXTER! KENTON'S REALLY DEAD, OKAY? HIS SNOKKING BRAINS EXPLODED RIGHT THROUGH THE TOP OF HIS HEAD! ... SOMEONE MUST'VE MOVED HIS BODY...
MOVED? BY WHO? OOZE-FOREST JANITORS?

IT COULD BE KLEM JUMPERS!
I DON'T CARE WHO OR WHAT IT WAS. WE HAVE TO FIND THAT BODY!
COME ON.

KENTON'S DEAD, BAXTER. WHAT'S THE BIG STAIN ABOUT FINDING HIS DUMB BODY?
KENTON HAS THE SHIP RIGGED TO ONLY RESPOND TO HIS IDENT CODEX. WITHOUT HIM, WE'LL NEVER GET OFFWORLD.
OUR VICIOUS CAPTAIN... HE ALWAYS HAD TO HAVE THE BIGGEST SLICE. HE TOOK MARLI FROM YOU. HE HOOKED ME ON THE PLUG-JUICE.

FACE THE CAMERA, WE ALL HATED KENTON! HE WAS DEF-CAKE, A REPREHENSIBLE EXCUSE FOR A HUMAN BEING. HE DESERVED TO DIE!


CYGNUS! WHAT THE—

NO NO NO! NOW HE'S DEAD!

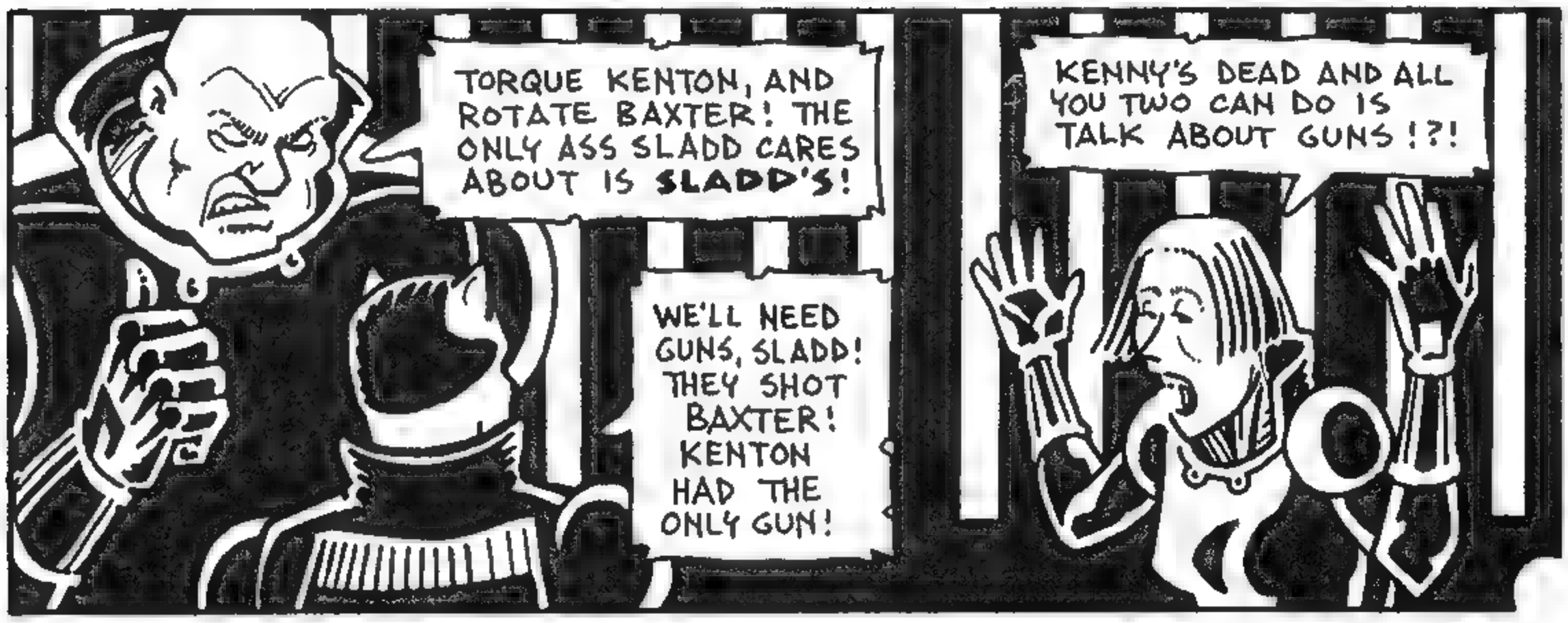
I WON'T BE NEXT!

NO NO NO

YOU LEFT HIM?!

BAXTER WAS RIGHT—YOU ARE A WORTHLESS COWARD! YOUR CHOICE OF COSMETIC SURGERY WAS IDEAL, 'FRAIDY-TAB! YOU LEFT BAXTER FOR DEAD AND RAN OFF TO SAVE YOUR WORTHLESS—
NO, WAIT, SLADD! LISTEN, IT WASN'T LIKE THAT—
LISTEN!

KENTON'S BODY WAS GONE! WHOEVER TOOK IT — THEY'RE THE ONES WHO KILLED BAXTER!


TORQUE KENTON, AND ROTATE BAXTER! THE ONLY ASS SLADD CARES ABOUT IS SLADD'S!
WE'LL NEED GUNS, SLADD! THEY SHOT BAXTER! KENTON HAD THE ONLY GUN!
KENNY'S DEAD AND ALL YOU TWO CAN DO IS TALK ABOUT GUNS!?!

CRAZY DAME... SHE HAD MORE REASON TO KILL KENTON THAN ANY OF US...
UMM...

WHAT-!?

I... DON'T THINK SHE DID IT. SHE'S ACTUALLY UPSET THAT KENTON'S DEAD, CYGNUS ONLY KNOWS WHY.
WELL, SLADD DIDN'T DO IT... AND YOU'RE TOO COWARDLY...
THANKS.

GRACK ALL THIS! SLADD SAYS WE HEAD OFFWORLD AND FAR AWAY FAST!

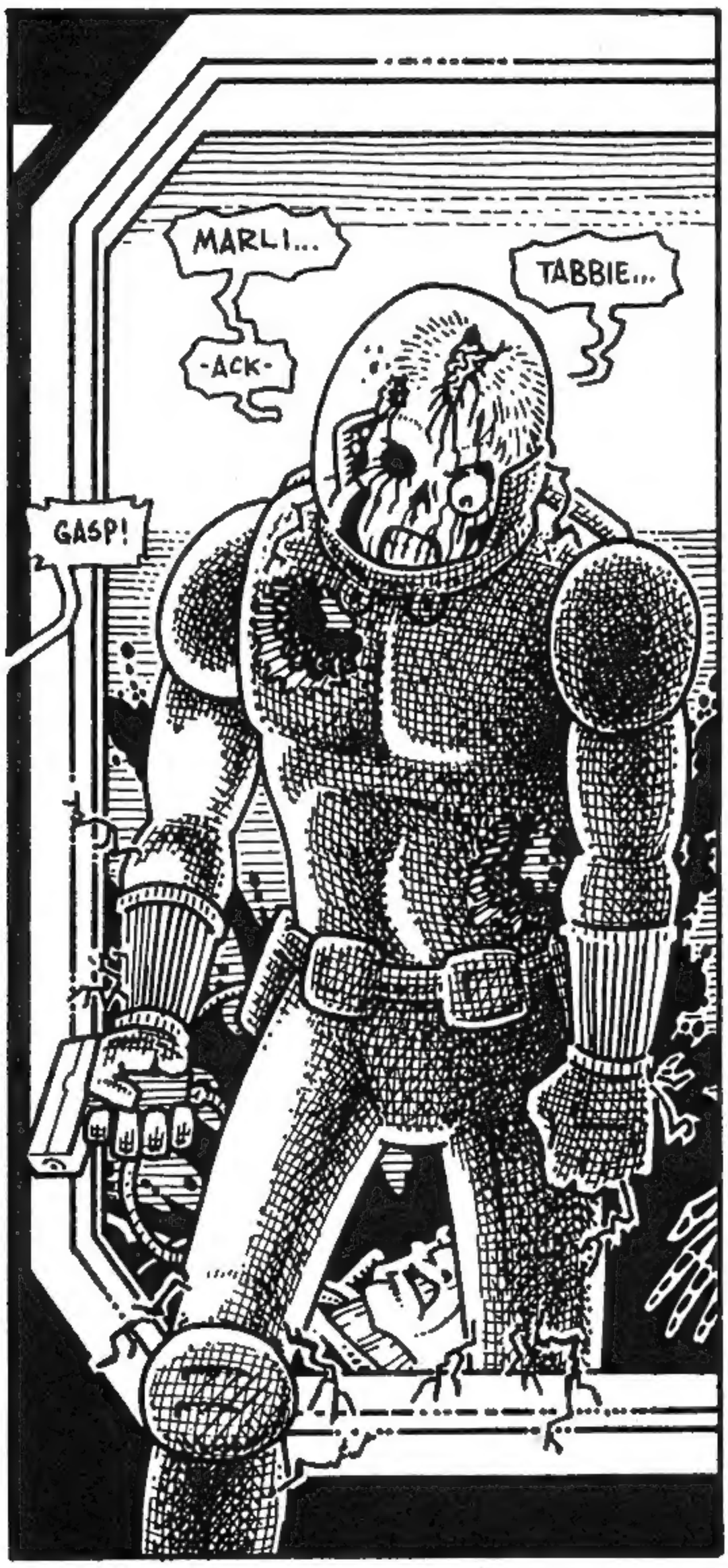
NO CAN DO.

THE SHIP'S RIGGED SO IT'LL ONLY RESPOND TO KENTON'S IDENT— Y'KNOW, HIS RETINA-PATTERN OR HAND-PRINT. THAT'S WHY BAXTER WAS SO HOT TO SEE KENTON'S BODY. WITHOUT IT, WE'RE TRAPPED HERE!
?!?
WE HAVE TO GET KENTON'S BODY BACK!
NO! KENNY'D NEVER...

OKAY. SLADD KNOWS WHERE KENTON KEPT MORE GUNS. WE'LL BE ~...
HUH?
BEP
??
?!?

IT'S THE AIRLOCK! SOMEONE'S ENTERED THE SHIP...
WE'RE READY.
DAMN!

GRAB A GUN, 'FRAIDY-TAB.
DOWN THE CORRIDOR! SLADD SEES SOMETHING!



To Be Concluded in *Death Rattle #5*

ABOUT OUR RATTLERS

John Wooley. Novelist, journalist, scriptwriter, and Kitchen Sink Press trading-card creator, John Wooley made his first-ever professional sale to a horror comic, the legendary *Eerie,* back in 1969. Undeterred by audience response, he's continued to write comics, leaving the field only periodically in order to gather strength.

Steve Mannion is a happy hermit living all alone, who hates pets and girlfriends and everyone. He spends his time anchored to a drawing table with a six pack of beer, churning out useless comic art for his futile choice of a career.

Tom Sutton, a.k.a. TFS, is the creator of Dr. Wrotwang's Wratz Works. Long ago, Sutton studied at the School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts where his painting instructor, the late George Upton Pickman, introduced him to the rats. Sutton's patron Charles Dexter Ward encouraged the artist's interests in forbidden rodent lore. Sutton's been trying to sell stories and drawings about rats to comics for years. At long last, we have arrived. Please remove that cat at once. Yes.

Doug Potter wrote and drew *Denizens of Deep City, Chips & Vanilla,* and *Mesozoic* for Kitchen Sink. His work has also appeared in *Dark Horse Presents, The Best of Dark Horse Presents,* and Marvel's *Wild Cards* mini-series. Currently, his comic book work can be found in Mojo Press's *Weird Business, The Wild West Show,* and this summer's *The Big Bigfoot Book.* He also illustrated the 1995 World Fantasy Award–winning, two volume collection of Bradley Denton's short stories, *The Calvin Coolidge Home for Dead Comedians* and *A Conflagration Artist.* He lives in one of the most expensive cities in the U.S., Austin, Texas. His day job (such as it is) is cartooning and illustrating for the *Austin Chronicle* weekly.

Matt Howarth, a storyteller with graphic obsessions, is probably best known for his *Those Annoying Post Bros.* and *Savage Henry* comic book series, but he is also the creator/writer/artist of a vast library of other works, including *WRAB: Pirate Television,* the *Keif Llama: Xeno-Tech* series, the *Konny & Czu* series, his *Sonic Curiosity* music review strips, and a number of horror strips for *Taboo* and *Fly in My Eye.* He is fanatically dedicated to the work-force ethic. His strongest influences have been the writings of Philip K. Dick and the music of French jazz band Magma and Canadian industrial band Skinny Puppy.

FANG MAIL™

Got a scare to share? A bone to pick? Write us at Fang Mail, Kitchen Sink Press, 320 Riverside Drive, Northampton, MA 01060 or e-mail kitchensp@aol.com

Dear Rattlers;

Boy, what a thrill this is! *Death Rattle* is finally back from the dead (has it really been seven years?), and it is looking healthier than ever. I must "confess," I was merely in my early teens back then. Ah, well, during the fifties the kids had EC . . .

Overall, the book looks very good. I am a big fan of Mark Schultz, and the cover art provided by him is, as always, excellent. "The Probability Chamber" reminds me of those old EC sci-fi stories . . . Which is not so strange, seeing that it is written by Mr. Schultz. The artist, Roger Petersen, shows talent, especially in his use of b/w and shadows.

"The Day I Lost My Head" was interesting and had a fascinating premise. The allegorical dimensions, as explained by Mr. Eldred, added another layer of depth to the story.

"Cut-up" was my introduction to the art of Brian Biggs and, say, I'm impressed. The story was cute (though perhaps somewhat thin), and the art was really entertaining.

"The Alcoholic Janitor" didn't quite do it for me—though I might purchase the book when it comes out.

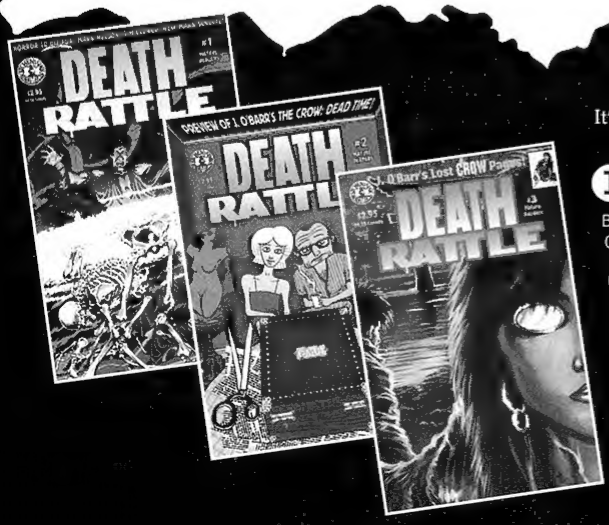
"The Kiss" was nice—Mark A. Nelson's detailed art is a delight to watch, and the story has a bittersweet edge to it that I quite enjoyed.

Overall, the stories in DR#1 can be described as cute little horror stories . . . Which is fine enough in itself. But I kinda miss those reeaally sinister and spine-chilling tales from Vol. II such as "Ill Bred by Moonlight" by Charles Burns (#1), "Junkyard Dog" by Baron and Holmes (#5), and the truly frightening "In League with the Devil" from Mueller and Hartwig (#11). One final question: Will you be featuring any of the original artists for Vol. II? I have fond (if somewhat twisted) childhood memories of huge breasts drawn by Rand Holmes, giant cosmic slugs from Jaxon, and . . . Well, just plain old weirdness from P.S. Mueller and Bill Hartwig.

That's it, I guess. Until next time, make mine . . . nah, forget it.

Yours sincerely,

Gaute Hjartaaker
Stord, Norway



Death Rattle™

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1. The frightful first issue of *Death Rattle's* new incarnation has a Mark Scultz cover, "The Kiss" by Schultz and Roger Peterson, plus stories by Brian Biggs, Mark Nelson, Tim Eldred, and the first part of Zane Campbell's "Alcoholic Janitor."

2. Sample the darker side of humor (or the lighter side of horror?) with Brian Biggs's cover and story "Cut Up," the medical oddities of Tony Millionaire's "Dr. Stodge Rimperton, Otologist," the comics debut of crazed New Zealander Simon Morse in "Straightjacket Ninja," more "Alcoholic Janitor," plus a *Crow: Dead Time* gallery with an exclusive introduction by J. O'Barr published nowhere else.

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